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ABSTRACT

This document synthesizes the findings of case studies of career guidance and advice for adults in the European Union. Section 1 examines the problems of helping the following groups: marginalized individuals in need of vocational or social (re)integration; individuals in the process of becoming marginalized, individuals who appear to be "problem free"; and groups adversely affected by the economic recession. The case study findings pertinent to the issue of facilitating adults' social, personal, and/or occupational transitions are detailed in section 2. Special attention is paid to facilitating vocational integration, encouraging self-esteem and determination, teaching adults to network, helping adults make the best use of what they have learned, and helping adults reacquire a social role and reintegrate into temporary or permanent settings. Section 3 presents the following institutional solutions to the problems of personalizing help, advice, and guidance and offering guidance for the medium- or long-term future: improving services at the individual level, preventing marginalization, developing policies at the European and national levels, adopting a multidisciplinary and holistic approach, and linking passive and active measures. Appended is information about quantitative and qualitative methods of evaluating counseling services and evaluation for cost-benefit analyses and services adapted to needs. The report contains 35 references. (MN)

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Lifelong Vocational Guidance:
European Case Studies

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Preface

The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Thessaloniki) and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Dublin) have over a number of years undertaken various projects on the subject of the vocational integration of young people and the vocational reintegration of adults.

It is the aim of this publication to summarise the main outcome of these efforts and to provide policy-makers and practitioners in the field with guidelines for the provision of guidance and advice throughout the working lives of individuals, the purpose being to support them in all the transitions they will have to face.

The social and vocational integration of young people and the social and vocational reintegration of adults are key issues at a time when youth unemployment is particularly high and when it is very hard to break the spiral of long-term unemployment. With the difficulties being encountered by many people in the European Union as a result of the economic crisis, the provision of help, guidance and advice on vocational matters has become the focus of today's policies.

The European Union has shown its determination to find a solution to these problems through the policies it has defined and the Community programmes it has established in recent years.

In the social chapter of the Maastricht Treaty, the European Commission's White Paper on 'Growth, Competitiveness, Employment' (1993), the Essen summits (1994) and the European Commission White Paper 'Teaching and learning: towards society' (1995), major principles for action have been stated.

In 1997, in its Communication, 'Towards a Europe of knowledge', the Commission cited the promotion of employment and, more specifically, the need for a new approach to vocational integration as among its principal concerns.

The Member States, meeting in the Council on Employment in Luxembourg (1997), opted for resolutions on employment outlining the range of actions to be undertaken in the Member States. Regarding vocational integration and reintegration, it declared that

> '.....Member States will ensure that:
> every unemployed young person is offered a new start before reaching six months of unemployment, in the form of training, retraining, work practice, a job or other employability measure;
> unemployed adults are also offered a fresh start before reaching twelve months of unemployment by one of the aforementioned means or, more generally, by accompanying individual vocational guidance.'

The vocational integration of young people as well as all the problems associated with the transition from school to training and employment, will probably be the

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Preface

focus of the European programme(s) that will succeed the Leonardo da Vinci and Socrates programmes.

In practice, for CEDEFOP (the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training) and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, those concerns regarding the vocational integration and reintegration of young people and adults have been translated into various projects and efforts.

Since 1991, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions has been working on the Eurocounsel programme on the role of guidance and advice for adults. CEDEFOP, for its part, has gone on to develop two major themes, 'The vocational guidance needs of various target groups aged under 28' and 'the social and vocational integration of young people at local level'.

In both institutions, the projects implemented have been the outcome of research and efforts set up and piloted in the Member States. For each project there have been national reports and a synthesis report. This body of reports has been taken as the basis for this publication.

Even though the former institution is more concerned with adults and the latter with young people, the results have in fact been highly complementary, combining to create a coherent approach to vocational integration and reintegration through the practical provision of lifelong advice and guidance.

There is now no doubt that appropriate advice and a process of lifelong learning are vital factors in periods of transition for individuals, in that they help to limit future risks of unemployment. They need to be developed not just as a response to problems but as preventive action.

Advisory, support and guidance services are therefore needed to help individuals through periods of transition. Because of the wide variety of the population groups affected and the problems they face, there is no one catch-all solution; rather there is a set of particular services designed to improve or change what is seen as an unsatisfactory or a risk situation. Due to the long life of vocational advice and guidance initiatives, the large number of operators involved and the growing needs of individuals, a wide diversity of problems has been diagnosed, which do not fit in very well with central or global forms of intervention. A consistent approach involving the social partners and a range of local organisations has been found to produce better results. At European and national levels, however, it is preferable to lay down general guidelines, to be adapted by each party to the specific context in which it operates, so that the aid and support provided can be decentralised, local and geared to the individual. This is the task set in this publication, which has been coordinated on behalf of CEDEFOP by Pascaline Descy.

13 May 1998

Clive Purkiss
Director, European Foundation for the
Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

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Director, European Centre for the
Development of Vocational Training

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European Case Studies

Preamble

This publication is a synthesis of the findings of the Eurocounsel project conducted since 1991 by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions on the role of guidance and advice for adults, as well as CEDEFOP projects. For instance, CEDEFOP has produced studies on 'determining the need for vocational counselling among different target groups of young people under 28 years of age in the European Community – Young Europeans and vocational counselling: what do which young people need and want?' (Chisholm, 1994). The Eurocounsel report (1994) covers 'the role of guidance and advice for adults on an evolving labour market'. Lastly, a more recent study deals with 'social and occupational integration at local level' (Stathopoulos, 1997) (see Bibliography at the end of this report).

Three difficulties have arisen in this synthesis report, of which the reader should be aware before embarking on the text.

First of all, the reports are not necessarily uniform in the subjects they cover. Both the target groups and the problems they discuss differ, sometimes widely. In all the scientific literature and in every public action programme, a clear distinction has traditionally been made between young people and adults.

Furthermore, these reports are already to some extent synthesis reports. This makes it a delicate exercise, given the risk of losing certain features of the original national reports which in a sense have been 'synthesised' twice. The essential aim of the studies, moreover, is to propose recommendations on how to improve the services in question. This means that they tend to concentrate on those services that are lacking or are of poor quality; the achievements are often implied rather than highlighted. In some cases, then, it seemed the natural approach to go back to the original reports to illustrate a topic.

Lastly, the European dimension is a factor only where the solution proposed is transnational mobility. All the operators involved in the other actions described are at local level – the city or region – or even at neighbourhood level.

Nonetheless, this body of reports has a number of strengths in that it gives an overall picture of the effects of the economic crisis on the advice and guidance services provided or envisaged in response to the expectations of existing or future users. This is one of the essential advantages of using the national reports as starting points. They are invaluable sources of information on how the services operate on a very small scale, without taking a comparative or international dimension as a basis. This synthesis report draws, then, on experience on the ground in many locations, directed at many different groups of people and with different objectives. The data on which the report is based are not necessarily harmonised or uniform, but they help to clarify and flesh out the more theoretical constructions commonly produced on advice and guidance.

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   Every area of life can be approached through counselling. Put simply, every individual has to face a series of many transitions of various types. There is no one ready-made solution to make the path smoother. The needs and demands must be clearly identified and analysed in each individual case.

   2.1. **The specific question of vocational integration** 27
   The inadequacy of the jobs on offer remains the essential cause of unemployment. When vacancies do occur, to be successful in obtaining the job one first needs to gain confidence in oneself. This also requires an acknowledgement of the world around one and a knowledge of the world of work. In other words, what is needed is to help young people to take their place in society.

   *2.1.1. **The personal dimension: encouraging self-esteem and determination*** 27
   As a recommendation, there is a prerequisite here which is beyond the control of advisory measures: people have to make themselves known if they are to be counselled. But the key word is still motivation or, more commonly, remotivation.

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2.1.2. ***Networking*** 29
However effective the effort to intermediate on the labour market or in matters of advice and guidance, people must be helped to discern and activate their own networks. The way personal networks are mobilised very often determines whether a person is integrated into the working world, and always determines integration in society.

2.1.3. ***Making the best use of what one has learned*** 30
Helping young people to persuade potential employers is a vital factor. Few people are recruited to the kind of job that corresponds to the special field for which they have been trained. Jobs are so scarce that accepting a post that does not make use of one's skills is an option that should not necessarily be dismissed. On the other hand, young people must be persuaded to waste no time in making their competences known. Above all, those who have had technical or vocational training must also know how to make good use of what they have learned.

2.2. **The question of reintegration** 33
When it comes to occupational reintegration, it is no longer just young people who are involved. The wide variety of groups affected means that measures must be differentiated according to far more criteria. Paradoxically, there should no longer be any doubt about the value of preceding actual recruitment by job-related activities – voluntary or socially useful work – which help to establish a working rhythm and a proper attitude to work.

2.2.1. ***Reacquiring a social role*** 33
Here the main recommendation is to help people regain a feeling of being useful. Working in the voluntary sector in line with this thinking.

2.2.2. ***Temporary reintegration*** 35
Public policy measures on employment also have a place in this context. They should be seen as a transition phase, for example in the move towards employment or towards retirement.

2.2.3. ***Reintegration in a different setting*** 37
Again with the idea of broadening the range of opportunities, the jobs market must not be the sole focus of interest; encouragement must be given to seeking out new opportunities. Setting up one's own business is a possible route.

3. **Institutional solutions: personalising help, advice and guidance – looking ahead to the medium- or long-term future** 40
The concept of prevention underlies every measure to help individuals not at immediate risk of unemployment or exclusion. This is a fairly recent approach internationally, coinciding with what the European Union sees as medium- or long-term actions, such as lifelong training or advice and assistance even for people who are in employment. For instance, appreciating the value of continuing training is in itself a protection against future risks of unemployment or being stuck in a dead-end job.

Among the recent issues, the private provision of advisory services highlights the funding of this form of intervention, and creates a risk that only people with sufficient financial resources have access to it.

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For a more detailed analysis of a person's particular situation and to help plan the most suitable forms of help, counselling needs to be both local and personalised.

3.1.1. ***Personalised help*** 41
Personalising aid helps the practitioner to analyse the situation of a person coming to him in greater detail. This also builds up the person's confidence in the soundness and effectiveness he can expect from the options suggested.

3.1.2. ***The activation factor*** 44
The main role of services must be to provide a sort of mentoring activity. The need is to help the individual develop and apply strategies to improve his situation.

3.1.3. ***The overall prospect: from one-off support to life plans*** 47
The aid and support work of counselling services should not be confined to occasional periods of occupational transition. The situation should be regarded in terms of one's whole life, taking all the other aspects of a person's life at and outside work into account as well.

3.1.4. ***Towards prevention*** 49
Counselling should be more widespread and an integral part of everyday life. It should be provided before the event and also contribute before unemployment or exclusion becomes established.

3.2. **Reviewing the concept and organisation of services at European, national and local level** 52
Although the target groups and the services offered vary greatly from one country to another and even from one region or town to another, outline directives should be laid down, which can then be adapted in each place to the particular context.

3.2.1. ***A specific policy at the European and national levels*** 53
A declaration of principle setting out the priorities and the main courses of action at European and national levels needs to be established, with minimum standards of guarantee in order to harmonise the practice of counselling within the European Union.

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3.2.2. ***The multidisciplinary and holistic approach*** 54
Not only must advice be provided to individuals, but the range of services should also be extended and clients should be directed towards other networks, where appropriate.

3.2.3. ***Linking passive and active measures*** 57
Here the recommendations are very practical. On the one hand, people should not have to forfeit their benefits when they move from a passive to an active measure or when they set up their own businesses. There must, therefore, be close contact among the bodies responsible for these two dimensions, social and economic.
On the other hand, active measures should be directed more systematically towards the institutions or authorities in charge of local economic development. Some solutions could, for instance, be based on the promotion of SMEs, the creation of new jobs or services and the development of self-employment.

3.2.4. ***The question of the training of practitioners and the (re)definition of their duties*** 59
Advisers themselves must have nationally certified training. This should be followed up by continuing training so that they can specialise in the advice they give. For example, sound expertise in the local economy is a prerequisite for giving advice on setting up a business.

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Introduction

Introduction

The substantial rise in unemployment in the countries of the European Union – from 3.7% long-term unemployment in 1975 to 10.9% in 1996 [1] – has meant that subsequent debate has focused on a number of questions relating to the measures needed to help people through this period of crisis. Unemployment is omnipresent (see tables 1 to 3) in the description of the problems encountered by a group of people for whom public intervention measures seek to take partial responsibility. In fact, this view of things is misleading in two ways.

First of all, the unemployed within the meaning of institutional definitions – and there are a number of definitions and categories in each case – are not the only ones to merit sustained attention from the authorities or from the various institutions or associations whose role it is to support and counsel people in difficulty. Those difficulties may be financial, the direct result of having lost or not being able to find a job and source of income, but the risks to the population of the European Union may come from other directions. Of course the problems include social or cultural integration, ill-health and any other form of disadvantage or disability. Nevertheless, unemployment is the problem most feared and the one on which most attention is brought to bear – often in vain – and the 18 million unemployed in the European Union are always the groups towards which public intervention is directed. This has varied in that the stress has shifted alternately from the unemployed in general to women, young people, immigrants or the long-term or very long-term unemployed, but the lack of a job remains the common factor.

This view of things, which leads to direct action in favour of individuals, is also misconceived, because it appears to support the theory that unemployment is due to the shortage of jobs. The idea is that the only question that makes sense is: what can be done to help the jobless who want to work to gain access to the jobs that are vacant? This places the emphasis on extending initial education, developing certification and the acquisition of more or less horizontal competences, the provision of vocational training, attitudes and behaviour patterns, knowing what to do and how to behave, etc. Stating the problems in this way is no doubt the pragmatic approach, since it is easier to tackle the characteristics of individuals – to train or advise them – than it is to alter the structural parameters of the economy as a whole. The advent and continued existence of a high level of unemployment are, above all, due to the reduced demand for labour as a result of too low an economic growth rate. In the absence of appropriate macroeconomic remedies, explicit intervention is concen-

[1] European Commission, 1997.

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Table 1

Certain indicators in European Union long-term unemployment – Total

	Rate of employment	unemployment rate[2]	unemployment rate: young people[3]	unemployment rate: long-term[4]	20-24 years old studying or training[5]
Europe of 15	67.7	10.9	21.8	48.2	37.0
Belgium	62.8	9.8	22.9	61.2	41.4
Denmark	81.1	6.9	10.6	26.6	48.5
Germany*	68.9	8.9	9.6	47.8	37.0
Greece	63.0	9.6	31.0	56.7	30.2
Spain	60.6	22.1	41.9	52.9	44.6
France	68.8	12.4	28.9	38.3	42.4
Ireland	63.8	11.8	18.1	59.6	28.0
Italy	58.4	12.0	33.5	65.6	35.3
Luxembourg	74.5	3.3	9.1	-	34.2
Netherlands	69.6	6.3	11.5	49.0	48.4
Austria	72.9	4.4	6.0	25.7	32.3
Portugal	71.2	7.3	16.7	53.0	40.5
Finland	72.8	15.4	38.2	35.9	49.2
Sweden	78.1	10.0	21.1	19.1	27.7
Un. Kingdom	76.0	8.2	15.5	39.8	23.8

1: % of the population of working age
2: no. of people of working age who are unemployed, as % of total active population (unemployed + employed)
3: % of the active population aged 15 to 24
4: % of unemployed
5: as a percentage

* including new Länder

Source: European Commission, 1997

Table 2

Certain indicators in European Union long-term unemployment – Women

	Rate of employment[1]	unemployment rate[2]	unemployment rate: young people[3]	unemployment rate: long-term[4]	20-24 years old studying or training[5]
Europe of 15	57.4	12.5	23.3	50.2	38.2
Belgium	52.5	12.8	27.2	63.0	43.0
Denmark	74.9	8.5	12.6	25.0	48.5
Germany*	59.8	9.8	8.8	51.7	36.0
Greece	46.9	15.3	41.1	62.6	31.4
Spain	46.3	29.5	48.7	59.6	50.2
France	61.8	14.7	32.1	39.8	43.7
Ireland	49.3	12.0	17.2	51.5	28.6
Italy	43.7	16.4	38.9	67.1	37.9
Luxembourg	45.9	4.7	8.2	-	30.8
Netherlands	59.2	8.2	12.2	45.3	44.8
Austria	64.0	5.3	7.1	29.1	29.3
Portugal	62.1	8.3	19.9	54.7	45.5
Finland	70.6	15.8	39.0	31.0	52.1
Sweden	76.1	9.4	20.4	16.0	28.7
Un. Kingdom	67.5	6.5	12.5	28.1	22.8

1: % of the population of working age
2: no. of people of working age who are unemployed, as % of total active population (unemployed + employed)
3: % of the active population aged 15 to 24
4: % of unemployed
5: as a percentage

* including new Länder

Source: European Community, 1997

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trated on the labour supply (training, counselling, organising the waiting list for jobs, etc.). This approach focuses too heavily on the supply of labour and skills, but it does have the merit of placing people at risk of exclusion at the heart of public or quasi-public intervention measures. It now seems to be generally accepted that a waiting list for jobs is not just making the best of a bad situation, but a necessary preservation of individuals' skills so that when the economy revives they are not excluded from recruitment for the newly created jobs.

Not all the groups are equal in terms of unemployment, the difficulties of integration or the employment crisis in the broader sense (lack of advancement, earnings, and career prospects). Young people are among the groups most affected[2] and are more often targeted by labour-market intervention measures. They are in fact a major challenge to a country, for they will be the working population of the future. Research on the vocational integration of young people shows that initial education, any additional training and the early years of their working lives to a great extent determine the prospects for lasting integration and a successful career. Future exclusion from working life or even from social or cultural life can sometimes be discerned very early on in the route taken by young people. It is important that they be quickly confronted with working attitudes and that they put into practice the skills in which they have been trained.

To sum up, although public intervention measures target individuals, this does not mean that people should systematically be treated as solely responsible for their own unemployment. But, looking further, although the causes of unemployment are no doubt structural or macro-economic, this does not mean either that nothing can be done at individual level. Helping and counselling people who are in difficulties or at risk of exclusion means preparing for economic revival. Just to sit back and wait would be tantamount to collective resignation to failure due to an adequate supply of skilled labour. If there is a revival, it will embody new forms and standards of production. The goods and services produced will change, the skills and qualifications required will be new. They are already emerging, but there is no doubt that many of tomorrow's trades do not yet exist.

Pending this possible economic revival, the Member States and Europe as a whole are setting up specific measures to combat unemployment, long-term unemployment and the risk of exclusion. What is at stake is the preservation of social cohesion at every level: local, national and European.

[2] Tables 1 to 3 show that unemployment rates are up to three times higher for young people than for the population as a whole.

The interest of international bodies has been expressed on several occasions:

- the European Commission White Papers: 'Growth, Competitiveness, Employment' (1993) and 'Teaching and learning: towards a learning society (1995);
- the Essen summits (1994);
- the Maastricht Treaty social chapter.

More recently, the guidelines of the Council for Employment in Luxembourg (1997) reached conclusions on the different actions to be undertaken in the Member States. One of these resolutions focuses on improving the vocational integration ability of both young people and adults:

> '.....Member States will ensure that: every unemployed young person is offered a new start before reaching six months of unemployment, in the form of training, retraining, work practice, a job or other employability measure; unemployed adults are also offered a fresh start before reaching twelve months of unemployment by one of the aforementioned means or, more generally, by accompanying individual vocational guidance.' (see European Union, European Commission, DGV, 1998).

The Luxembourg guidelines also mention the resolve to move from passive to active measures, and to facilitate the transition from school to work.

In 1997, in its Communication 'Towards a Europe of knowledge', the Commission cites the promotion of employment and more specifically the need for a new approach to vocational integration as among its main concerns.

Furthermore, the vocational integration of young people as well as all the problems associated with the move from school to training and employment will probably be at the heart of the European programmes succeeding the Leonardo da Vinci and Socrates programmes. These questions will be tackled in detail during the forthcoming summit in Cardiff.

The European Union, then, is developing a series of recommendations, just as it is taking decisions on employment. This may be compared to the work of CEDEFOP, as outlined in this synthesis report, on enhancing employability – acquiring the characteristics compatible with recruitment once a job opportunity emerges – and enabling individuals to adapt to any jobs they may be offered. The experience and

Table 3

Certain indicators in European Union long-term unemployment – Men

	Rate of employment[1]	unemployment rate[2]	unemployment rate: young people[3]	unemployment rate: long-term[4]	20-24 years old studying or training[5]
Europe of 15	78.0	9.6	20.6	46.3	35.7
Belgium	72.8	7.6	19.4	59.1	39.8
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Germany*	77.9	8.2	10.3	44.5	38.0
Greece	80.3	6.0	21.4	47.1	28.7
Spain	75.3	17.5	36.2	45.9	39.1
France	76.0	10.6	26.0	36.4	40.9
Ireland	78.1	11.6	18.9	64.8	27.5
Italy	73.4	9.4	29.2	64.1	32.6
Luxembourg	76.9	2.5	9.9	-	37.5
Netherlands	79.7	5.0	10.8	53.7	52.0
Austria	81.8	3.7	5.0	23.5	35.3
Portugal	81.0	6.5	14.3	51.3	35.5
Finland	74.9	15.0	37.4	40.4	46.5
Sweden	80.1	10.5	21.7	21.3	26.7
Un. Kingdom	84.5	9.5	18.0	45.9	24.7

1: % of the population of working age
2: no. of people of working age who are unemployed, as % of total active population (unemployed + employed)
3: % of the active population aged 15 to 24
4: % of unemployed
5: as a percentage

*: including new Länder

Source: European Community, 1997

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Introduction

research on which this document draws go a little further than employment, in that close attention has been paid to all forms of activity and specific recommendations are made on them.

In the text that follows, the difficulty of the task is evident: it is not just offering aid (an active measure), but it must also avoid leaving individuals without resources on the fringes of society (a passive measure); the need is not only to provide jobs but also to give abundant advice on longer-term integration and future careers.

Even though the purpose of the two documents differs - the White Paper on 'Growth, competitiveness, employment' (1993) is a statement of proposals to be considered, whereas the texts that follow are decisions adopted by the European Union - they both define the fields of intervention for the national and international authorities. Nevertheless, these recommendations and decisions are very much directed towards employment policy. For example, Chapter 7 of the White Paper covers education and training, Chapter 8 the link between job creation and economic growth and Chapter 9 the cost of labour.

At the same time, many reports, seminars, programmes and recommendations have attempted to formulate the policies best suited to tackling the various problems outlined here: the Eurocounsel research-action programme conducted by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (1991), as well as reports issued by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the International Labour Office (ILO) and the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) - the list is not exhaustive. At any event, there is a notable strengthening of the potential role of counselling and guidance services in the active measures for employment and the vocational routes and life plans of individuals.

In defining the role and purpose of these support and advisory services, we find several different terms used to describe the same things. Some of the structures are regarded as 'support' services, others as 'advisory' or 'support and advice' or 'vocational counselling and guidance' services. Their essential contribution, whatever the name by which they are called, is towards the prevention and reduction of unemployment and social exclusion by helping individuals[3] to find the path best suited to them personally in their own particular position. Whereas it used to be the traditional role of the vocational adviser to provide vocational information and guidance,

[3] The word *client* is frequently used to designate a person using support, counselling and vocational guidance services. This concept has not been generally used here. It is more appropriate for a commercial service provider, and does not give an accurate picture of most of the services described here.

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especially for those about to leave school or who have just left, rising unemployment and stubborn long-term unemployment have led to the development of units focusing equally on the adult unemployed or even on those still in employment. There are agencies catering more specifically for young people (for instance, schools), and others for adults who have already had jobs (national employment agencies, for example), but many of the support, counselling and guidance units operating today are able to propose special measures to both young people and adults.

We can already discern the existence of different practices and objectives previously camouflaged under different names (integration/social reintegration vocational reintegration). It is a subject to which we shall return in Chapter 2.

'Counselling' is defined as bringing together all those forms of the structured provision of advice, support and information through which an individual arrives at an informed and self-determined understanding of how he should deal with his working status (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions – Watt, 1997, p.133).

The stated end objective of these counselling services is to help the individual to bring order into his working life (European Foundation – Watt, 1997, p. 56), take decisions and find the most appropriate path in his own situation. The types of counselling range from services specifically linked to the reintegration of the unemployed on the labour market to those that develop the competences of their 'clients' by directing them towards the most appropriate training course or studies for their needs or those that will help them face up to their social status (European Foundation – Watt, 1997, p. 36). Here the main role is to prepare the largest number of individuals to take up work (paid or unpaid) that already exists or that has been created in order to match the supply of labour more closely to the demand[4].

Vocational guidance and the services that provide it are expected to perform a positive role in promoting the social and economic integration of individuals and helping them to map out a satisfactory route in personal terms and a productive route on the social level. Besides providing vocational guidance, they should raise the level of qualifications of individuals and help them to draw up long-term projects (life plans), with the ultimate aim of improving the quality of their lives.

The transformations brought about by economic and social change will lead to the development of such services. They will alter values, practices and mentalities (perception and understanding of phenomena), which in turn will affect the needs of individuals and the services to be provided by the agencies concerned.

Vocational counselling and guidance services will have to adapt to these changes on the labour market and in individuals. If society changes, clearly the guidance to be given will also change, and theory, practice and the goals will have to be reconsidered. The subject is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3 of this document, especially as, in the current context of economic crisis and the shortage of jobs, the role of counselling and guidance units can no longer be confined to occupational integration or reintegration, in short to that of a 'employment facilitator'. This is all the more obvious when such services, even if in close contact with the local (or wider) labour market, and even if they manage to set up a network of employer partners, have no miracle cure: jobs will not become available if none exist.

By the nature of things, the definitions and objectives to be allocated to support, counselling and guidance services are changing. Today it is no longer really a question of trying to eradicate unemployment and the risk of exclusion it entails. These structures may, however, make unemployment less endemic by applying appropriate 'treatments'. In the absence of a panacea, alternatives and palliative remedies may be 'prescribed' – to continue the medical analogy – or at least proposed and strongly recommended. They must often be improved so that they best serve the interests of each individual (Chapter 3), while efforts are made to determine the current gaps and weaknesses which appropriate coordination would no doubt help to remedy. The alternatives to unemployment, the palliatives for difficult situations or the treatments to be proposed by the counselling and guidance services will differ depending on the target groups and their needs – first aid, or longer-term help.

In the initial stages, then, there should be as precise a definition as possible of those who now need or will need this particular support in the course of their lives, so as to determine as best one can the response(s) required (Chapter 1). In the second chapter, the initiatives themselves are described. Particular findings on current practices and suggestions for solutions set out in the documents used are presented in the third and final chapter. Finally, it should be pointed out that the evaluation of these counselling services should not be overlooked but should also be the subject of special recommendations. This question is discussed in the annex.

[4] Again, in stating the problem in this way it must not be assumed that unemployment is a problem linked solely to an alledgedly inadequate or deficient labour supply.

1

Defining target groups and helping very disparate people

1. Defining target groups and helping very disparate people

Before any attempt is made to provide guidance or advice or to help someone to integrate, there must be a diagnosis. There can be no hope of a piece of advice being effective or to the point unless the root problem has first been defined. Such a diagnosis must be based on an evaluation of the needs and expectations of particular groups, seen against their geographic, economic and socio-cultural background.

Since population groups are not homogeneous, it is relatively difficult to identify and construct target groups. A whole series of variables needs to be taken into consideration before arriving at a sound diagnosis, and – depending on the context – these may be more or less significant or numerous. The level of training, the amount of work experience, the geographical context (an area in economic decline or, on the contrary, a growth area) and an individual's social and cultural environment are still the determining factors that should first be taken into account so that the most appropriate help can be offered and the best solution for someone's particular situation can be suggested.

1.1. Methodological problems in identifying target groups

If we were to represent the process of categorising the population visually – as an aid to understanding – the identification of target groups could be seen as operating on the Russian doll principle. Briefly, there could be three big dolls, three big sets of individuals[5], defined according to their current situation and their present and future needs: short-, medium- or long-term.

These three main groups call for three main types of response – ranging from highly urgent to very detailed.

Within these groups there are sub-groups (based on, for example, age, sex, ethnic or social origins, level of education, etc.), and then sub-sub-groups, in which other variables will be considered as pertinent and so having an effect and to be taken into account (social and cultural environment, economic activity in the area in which they live, etc.). For each of these, obviously, the response will be different because of the particular issues raised.

In the same way, the measures to be taken and the policies to be applied will have to be set up on several levels and trigger off various degrees of intervention: European, national, regional and local.

[5] The word play in the almost indiscriminate use of the words 'groups' or 'individuals' is intentional.

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The response cannot be the same for two different individuals simply because their levels of qualification are the same and because both are unemployed[6]: 'turnkey' solutions do not exist. It is clear that consideration must also be given to people's aspirations and their motivation for wanting to enter a given branch of the working world, as well as the particular problems they might meet in adapting by reason of their origins (ethnic or social), the environment in which they develop, the area in which they live and the job opportunities available once they are trained, for example.

For instance, while it is important to devise a fairly broad initial typology, it is also vital to bear in mind that it will always be necessary to proceed from the general to the particular and then from the particular to the general in the main target groups to be identified and the solutions to be provided, so that the questions arising and the problems to be solved in each individual case can be clearly discerned.

Within these main groups, people still vary considerably but, as a general rule, the problems they face are fairly comparable.

The relevance of the three main groups described in this chapter is that they allow for both the social and occupational status of the individual and the (overall) type of response needed to point the way to a better quality of life. In the next paragraph, the subjects discussed are: marginalised people who need to integrate, individuals who are at risk of marginalisation and the 'apparently problem-free'.

1.2. Marginalised individuals in need of vocational or social (re)integration

The group made up of marginalised individuals is the one that the vocational support, counselling and guidance units should treat as the highest priority. It includes all those who have severed their links with society and the working world and who are in a very dire situation.

As we hinted when we approached the question of relevance in the construction of target groups, this group is far from homogeneous. It contains youngsters who have left school without a diploma or skill and have never had access to a job or who have very little work experience, the long-term unemployed, for example the disabled or those who have abandoned everything – perhaps because they had not much to lose anyway – and who have lost all contact with their personal and family networks.

Such marginalisation implies non-participation in socially recognised and valued activities and roles, including of course non-participation in gainful employment, which is still, according to several reports, an important channel for the building of identity (Chisholm, 1994, p. 48).

For these drifters, whose downward path may lead to begging, prostitution and crime, exclusion from the labour market is not the most urgent problem. The priority is said to be 'immediate survival', and then finding somewhere to live, recovering their self-confidence and making connections in their social world once again. The problem is all the more critical for them in that, having given up all hopes of betterment, they do not turn to the services that could help them and form in some way an 'invisible group': such groups are known to exist and there is reason to believe that their needs could be met within those structures, but the means of reaching and supporting the people concerned are scarce, perhaps non-existent.

The UK, Netherlands and Danish reports published by CEDEFOP (Howieson *et al.*, 1994; Wijnaendts van Resandt, 1994; Maaløe, 1994) give a clear picture and provide examples of these individuals – young people in these instances – who are unskilled, sometimes with no work experience and no fixed abode.

Besides these groups, who are almost beyond reach and who seldom ask for the aid they need, exclusion may also be due to failure on the part of the support, counselling and guidance services – or specific services – to take responsibility for the situation of certain population groups. The countries taking part in the Eurocounsel research project of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions have highlighted – and deplore – certain cases of exclusion that have not come about as a result of the individual's deliberate intent.

Box 1 gives an example of this type of discrimination or delayed aid whose impact may prejudice the possibility of someone being integrated or reintegrated.

Box 1

The voucher programme for unemployed adults

The guidance voucher programme is a pilot programme launched in late 1992 by the Guidance Network, Bradford Training and Enterprise Council.

Under the scheme, unemployed adults can 'buy' employment and training guidance and advice, paying with a voucher.

[6] It should be pointed out that were these criteria to be multiplied to infinity the result would be to individualise treatment completely.

"Only unemployed adults strictly fulfilling the conditions laid down are entitled to use the guidance voucher programme. Those conditions relate to age, the length of time a person has been unemployed and the type of social support received. People are directed to the guidance voucher programme solely by the job centre, provided that they satisfy the conditions and the centre feels that they need it.

To be entitled to a voucher, a person must have been registered as unemployed for the six months preceding the application, be in direct receipt of social allowances and be eighteen or over. In addition, at an interview at the job centre the person must show that he or she needs guidance and advice.

Once a person has proved that the conditions are met and a need for advice has been established, the job centre staff give the person a voucher for and information on the six accredited agencies and the type of services they offer".

Later on we are told that no one agency is able to offer advice and guidance on the whole range of training and learning opportunities available in the region.

Source: Hurley, 1994 (p. 134-136).

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In some countries, immigrants and refugees find that they are automatically excluded and marginalised because the law does not permit them to work and take advantage of the social services. In Denmark, it is almost impossible for anyone to gain access to general employment services unless he is already covered by an occupational insurance scheme. In other countries, it is not easy for an unemployed person to benefit from counselling services unless he has been out of work for at least a year. If a person faces other difficulties in his personal life, if his qualifications are at too low a level, if he is of foreign origin, etc., it might reasonably be supposed that within a year he will be homeless and marginalised and be far harder to 'recuperate', to use the term adopted by counselling practitioners. Here, the fear of waste (of funding and services) leads to other forms of waste (individual and collective).

Long-term unemployment is also widely perceived as having a crucial role in the process leading to the development of an underclass or to social exclusion. The individual gradually loses his network of working and personal relations and has less chance of easily finding another job, or at least a role in society, without specific help. Since they are not kept up to date or refined, his competences and knowledge 'age' and it becomes harder to use his skills as

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currency on a labour market where priority is increasingly given to more highly qualified people.

Since not all members of this marginalised group apply for support, it is no doubt one of the most difficult to define and identify and it is therefore hard to meet its needs. It is also a group for which prevention is no longer an option; what its members need is action, as quickly as possible; there must be a genuine effort to provide support and advice, even to take over responsibility for them, and above all to restore their confidence in themselves.

1.3. Individuals in the process of becoming marginalised

This group is just as varied as the previous group but its situation is less critical, although there is a risk of it becoming so in the absence of suitable measures (see Chapters 2 and 3). Individuals in the process of marginalisation can be considered to be unemployed young people, people in areas in decline and those who 'do not always appear in the visual range of guidance counsellors' (young homebound women, for example: Chisholm, 1994).

The most commonly reported case of this group is that of people with low levels of skills. Often the training opportunities to which they can aspire are very limited – in some areas non-existent – to allow them to improve their precarious status.

This is particularly the case in Greece, where the national report (Zanni-Teliopoulou, Stathakopoulou, 1995) clearly shows that young people in this situation have little chance of returning to school once they have dropped out, or of taking a training course, which increases the risk of marginalisation and exclusion. Vocational training courses exist, but in the private sector they are too expensive and in the new short-cycle colleges the priority is given to the best qualified young people, i.e. those who have completed their secondary education but have not obtained a place at university.

The sub-group of unemployed young people includes both youngsters without a diploma or qualifications and those with low-level diplomas, together with those who have better diplomas but cannot find their first job for other reasons, for example the lack of jobs in their region.

The economic situation in the region is sometimes just as important as the standard of education achieved, as shown by several reports[7].

Two CEDEFOP national studies in particular were to a great extent devoted to this subject (Fernández de Castro, De Elejabeitia, 1994; McCarthy, 1994). They examine the problems of the integration of young people in regions that no longer have their basic economic fabric and traditional employment: the Bilbao estuary in Spain, where economic decline arrived suddenly, bringing about the collapse of the industrial base (heavy industry), and the West of Ireland, where small firms and jobs in the primary sector predominate.

The risk of becoming unemployed and marginalised depends to a great extent on the level of qualifications of the individual, but there are other factors as well (age, sex, ethnic origin), and unemployment is unevenly distributed depending on the region in which a person grows up and settles. Box 2, for example, lists certain figures that give a good picture of young people in the Mezzogiorno, in southern Italy.

Box 2

Regional differences and aggravating circumstances
The Mezzogiorno in Italy

In terms of standards of education and integration opportunities, there are substantial inequalities in Italy, to the detriment of the South.

School failure indicators (based on the number of years that have to be repeated during the period of compulsory schooling) are higher in the South than in northern and central Italy.

Besides the standard of education, factors such as sex, age and the lack of economic vitality in the region combine to increase the risk of unemployment and exclusion in this area.

Unemployment and discrimination by age groups:
In general, youngsters aged 14 to 24 are more at risk of unemployment than older groups.

Unemployment and sex discrimination:
In the country as a whole, women of all ages are at greater risk of unemployment than men.

In 1989, the overall unemployment rate in southern Italy was three times higher than in northern and central Italy.

The unemployment rate for young men in 1989 was 47% in southern Italy, compared with 9% in northern and central Italy.

The rate of unemployment for girls and young women aged 14 to 24 at the same date was 85% in the South and 27% in other regions.

[7] This is explicit recognition of what has already been pointed out several times in this text: the problem of unemployment is above all a global structural problem, not an inadequate supply of jobs.

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The Portuguese report (Alveca et al., 1994) on the region of Setubal (Portugal) depicts a more or less similar pattern of unemployment. Girls and young women are twice as likely to be jobless as are boys (18%, compared with 9%), even though they are relatively better trained (one third of girls aged 15 to 27 are still in the educational system, compared with one quarter of boys and young men). The youth unemployment rate for 15 to 24 year olds in France (1990) was close to 16% , and over 28% in the case of young women. In 1994, 70% of all unemployed young people in Austria were female.

In most of the national reports throughout Europe, girls and young women are more often placed in the category of those 'becoming marginalised'. This is even more evident in southern Europe (Spain, Italy, Greece) than in the North. Clearly cultural traditions have a marked impact in that they help to prolong gender stereotypes and a dichotomy between work inside and outside the home – housework and paid employment. In southern regions, girls are not always encouraged to pursue their education too long after the period of compulsory schooling since a woman's place is seen as being in the home rather than on the labour market. Nevertheless, even in the North, quite apart from the traditional and cultural attitudes that prevail in the Mediterranean areas, they do not enjoy equal status either. Success at school does not translate into equal opportunities in training and in employment.

The German national report published by CEDEFOP (Schweitzer, Wolfinger, 1995) describes the particular difficulties encountered by girls, especially in vocational training, in the dual system in which, in practice, few streams of training have been planned for trades not typically engaged in by males. Even though girls perform just as well in their studies, in general they have more difficulty than boys in finding their first jobs or training, both of which need to fit in with their family duties. They find it just as hard to obtain specialist advice. In Denmark, for example, two thirds of the long-term unemployed are women, even though they are not officially recognised as such, as reported by Hurley for Germany in the Eurocounsel Portfolio of case studies published by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (1994, p. 74).

The Eurocounsel synthesis report published by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Watt, 1997) also places in this group those who are excluded or on the path to exclusion: the 'younger old people' who have had to take early retirement against their will, or those made

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redundant in mid-life who, in losing all their working contacts, also lose their social contacts. This group needs to be taken into constant account in that, in view of demographic, economic and social change, the overall reduction in working hours and greater job flexibility, etc., it is bound to increase.

CEDEFOP's synthesis report on the need for vocational counselling among different target groups of young people under 28 years of age in the European Community (Chisholm, 1994) and the UK national report (Howieson et al., 1994) also report on the case of young migrants and those belonging to ethnic minorities. They tend to come from economically disadvantaged groups and their family, social and working networks are not sufficiently complex or firmly established to enable them to find a good job, or more simply to find work that matches their expectations and qualifications. In addition, as mentioned in the Belgian national report (Ouali et al., 1994), it is evident that there are wide differences between the jobs done by immigrants and those performed by the indigenous population. Immigrants are noticeably absent from public-sector employment and, whatever the sector, are relegated to the least skilled jobs.

To continue with the Russian doll image touched on at the start of this chapter, besides the general problem requiring a solution, it seems that particular situations need to be taken into account, as they may improve – or more often aggravate – a person's status and possible itinerary. A young unemployed person will no doubt find it far harder to enter the working world if he or she is in a disadvantaged sub-group – for example, young homebound women or the low-skilled – and his or her situation will be even worse if that person is in the sub-sub-group of 'those in an area of economic decline'.

The different variables (sex, age, ethnic origin, level of skills, economic activity in the region, etc.), singly or in combination, contribute towards marginalisation.

The group thus formed is at the intersection between the more dramatic situation of the marginalised and the more advantageous situation of people who are 'apparently problem-free'. Depending on the number and intensity of aggravating circumstances and constraints or positive personal, occupational or structural factors entailed, the status of a member of this group may fluctuate to his advantage or disadvantage, so that he moves from one of the main groups cited to another.

For instance, it is evident that people in this group, without being entirely marginalised or excluded from society or the working world, have problems that they find it hard to solve without outside help. The services that should be generously provided by the support, advisory and/or vocational guidance services very often fluctuate from active measures to prevention.

1.4. Individuals who are 'apparently problem-free'

More specifically, this group includes young people who have completed their period of education 'normally', young workers and wage-earners in general. In the eyes of the support, counselling and guidance services whose stated priority is to combat unemployment and exclusion, the group does not appear to need to be considered as candidates for or beneficiaries of special services.

Nevertheless, trends on the labour market are now in the direction of greater job flexibility and a growing pressure of demand from people whose diplomas and training are at an ever higher level. This implies that it is not necessarily enough to enter the labour market or to find one's first job, even if it is relatively stable. Other pressures, needs and concerns may come into being. Furthermore, once these services advocate work to help people improve the quality of their lives and take a far broader view than merely the transition from school to work, they might well assume responsibility for monitoring people's progress throughout their working lives and in managing other transitions as well (from one job to another, etc.).

As already discussed a little earlier, economic and social changes do not simply lead to changes in the likelihood of finding and holding on to a job. If society and the labour market change, the values attached to work and the quality of life will also evolve and be reflected in each person's practices, expectations, life prospects and plans for the future.

Work is not just a means of securing an income; above all it is a place where one can express oneself and find fulfilment. In practice, we shall find in this group of 'apparently problem-free' people all those who, for one reason or another, are not entirely satisfied with their current working situation and hope to improve it.

The group includes not only those at risk of losing their present jobs at some time and who need to make preparations now for this possibility by improving their skills and qualifications and making themselves competitive again on the labour market, but also all those people – adults and those firmly established in their jobs – who seek opportunities for promotion in their current employment and for bettering themselves in their personal and working lives.

In this group we would also include young – and not so young – workers who are not in the jobs for which they have trained, or are in a branch other than the one they would originally have chosen, especially when they are over-qualified for the employment they have obtained.

The report on Scotland (Chisholm, 1994; Howieson et al., 1994) states on this subject that young adults (18-24 year-olds) have similar needs for information and advice as older adults, for example in looking for a job or obtaining promotion.

From a general viewpoint, the position of such people does not seem to be dramatic or to call for urgent support. Most of them, especially the young people, have qualifications, they have completed their general or technical and vocational education in secondary school, many of them have obtained diplomas and even degrees in tertiary education. They have successfully integrated into the labour market. Even so, they may face two problems:

- either they may up to now have only found temporary or part-time jobs, or employment under fixed-term contracts, and have been switching from one job to another with short periods of unemployment in between, which may not be very significant but which take their toll, at least on a personal level;

- or they may have obtained and held onto a job, but one that does not match up to their training and qualifications.

The report on youngsters in the West of Ireland (McCarthy, 1994) offers an example of people of this type who are relatively well educated – having at least completed their secondary education – who, in the absence of jobs matching their qualifications in their region, have to accept subordinate positions. There is an almost parallel situation in Greece with those who have left with a diploma on completion of their secondary education* but who have not obtained a university place.

The question that arises here is not one of integration or reintegration into the labour market. Nor is it a problem of now having to face the risk of exclusion. If we were to go back to the term of marginalisation as used in the previous two groups, this would be a case of 'marginalisation by negligence' (Chisholm, 1994, p. 15). Since this particular group is not in a critical situation calling for active measures and sustained support, occupational support, counselling and guidance services often take little notice, even though

* We have left this term vague, as there are different situations in each country: it may correspond to the Abitur in Germany, the bachillerato in Spain, etc. Nevertheless, the standard is that of a person emerging from secondary education having passed an examination which would normally allow him or her to go on to university.

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the group has needs that should be met or lacks the structures or support and networks it needs to take advantage of the help it could use.

Certain projects are being set up in an effort to help people in the workplace itself.

This is the case with the VUS pilot project (adult education subsidies) being developed in Denmark. It consists of enhancing people's daily work and lives in society by incorporating counselling on general education and vocational training into the work environment itself (Hurley, 1994).

An aspiration and expectation of individuals in this group is more certainly the opportunity to move upwards. The help that the services concerned could promote here is obviously more detailed, but the demand exists, it is legitimate and it must be taken into account if a person is not to lose self-confidence or be trapped in a situation which does not really suit him, in the absence of a better alternative.

1.5. Three groups of people who have been adversely affected by the economic recession

The three target groups described above show the extent to which the economic situation is a variable that aggravates what are already disadvantaged personal and/or social situations. It is clear from all the reports consulted that the difficulties of economic and social integration are all the greater for a person without a diploma or qualifications, or living in what is regarded as a depressed area, when that person is a woman or a migrant or from an ethnic minority.

The difficulties are all the greater when it comes to finding a job, but even then it is hard to keep a job. Even those who have found a foothold in the working world may suffer from the effects of the economic situation (because of the growing flexibility of jobs, etc.), or may hope for and seek (re)integration in a manner closer to their aspirations.

For instance, when the economy suffers everyone suffers – some more than others – but in all cases solutions have to be found (see Chapter 2) in an effort to combat unemployment or the inherent risk of exclusion and to improve the quality of life.

Although the level of education and qualifications is and will remain a key factor in the successful transition to employment, besides personal characteristics of social value (such as self-respect, motivation, life plans, etc.), it is no longer possible to envisage a completely linear link between education and employment. Family or social networks are undoubtedly the best solution in many cases, but they are often no longer sufficient; outside help is needed in the form of special bodies set up for the purpose, even if they too are not always sufficient or are not specific enough to solve all the problems.

At the level of European, national, regional and local policies, it is already accepted that suitable counselling and a process of lifelong learning are vital factors in periods of transition in people's lives to contain the risk of future unemployment and exclusion, and that therefore these services need to be developed (not just as active measures but also on a preventive basis).

Counselling, help and guidance units may therefore be necessary to support individuals in their transition periods. Because of the heterogeneity of the population groups concerned and the problems they face, there is no one catch-all solution; what can be offered is a set of specific services designed to improve or change a situation that is seen to be unsatisfactory or as creating a risk.

Facilitating transition (social, personal and or occupational)

2. Facilitating transition (social, personal and/or occupational)

Every area of life can be approached through counselling. Put simply, every individual has to face a series of many transitions of various types. There is no one ready-made solution to make the path smoother. The needs and demands must be clearly identified and analysed in each individual case.

Chapter 1 essentially describes the target groups of support and guidance services. Although Chapter 3 is obviously devoted to the services themselves and their shortcomings, together with recommendations for advice practitioners, the second chapter has the more specific aim of looking at the needs and expectations of young people and adults in to relation those services and the solutions they can propose and offer in practice.

While the previous chapter deals with both young people and adults and makes no particular distinction by allocating them to one target group or another, in this chapter we focus more on the nature of the aid already supplied or to be supplied, and it is preferable to discuss them separately. Not all the expectations of the two groups, or the major problems they face at times of transition, are the same. There is no one solution that will suit everyone. Their needs and expectations must be clearly identified and analysed on a case-by-case basis.

All these groups in contact with support, counselling and guidance units have one factor in common: their intrinsic difficulties in finding their place in the working world and society and/or in taking full advantage and making the best use of what they have already achieved.

For both groups, the question of personal identity needs to be tackled, and this will be covered by the vocational support, counselling and guidance units. Nevertheless, on a personal level for example, while a young person wants to construct an identity, in the case of an adult it is more accurate to talk about 'reconstruction'. The services to be provided, therefore, will differ.

In the same way, at the socio-occupational level, the problem facing a young person will usually be that of access to employment, especially a first job – in other words taking the first step on the labour market. The system to be tackled, then, is the transition from school to employment. For an adult, the question of transition is far more related to rejoining and leaving the labour market following periods of unemployment

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and/or the move from one job to another. Here the problem is more specifically one of reintegration.

There are similarities, which will be pointed out, but these are in fact two very different types of transition and they cannot be lumped together. The needs themselves are different, as are the practical steps to be taken and the objectives, even though ultimately the principles and the concerns expressed are comparable.

There are also similarities in the expectations and needs of the two groups, since in both cases what is faced is transition. Furthermore, as pointed out in the previous chapter, for certain groups – essentially marginalised people in need of integration – access to employment is the culmination of a whole process of aid, one that may be directed to both young people and the less young. Although the two groups are discussed separately, both the similarities and the divergences will become apparent in the course of the discussion, in terms of the aid that is provided by the counselling and guidance units which, in certain cases, may overlap.

2.1. The specific question of vocational integration

The inadequacy of the jobs on offer remains the essential cause of unemployment. When vacancies do occur, to be successful in obtaining the job one first needs to gain confidence in oneself. This also requires an acknowledgement of the world around oneself and a knowledge of the world of work. In other words, what is needed is to help young people to take their place in society.

The problem of vocational integration is more specifically related to school-leavers with or without diplomas or vocational qualifications.

They are to be found in all three of the target groups already defined, and the response to be offered by counselling and guidance services will need to be geared to the specific position of each person, irrespective of the fact that he or she has just left school. A youngster who is 'apparently problem-free', for example, who has obtained a school-leaving diploma and who then finds a job, will not necessarily be in need of 'social construction'. He will no doubt already have a family setting, friends, and a social and occupational environment that will suffice for his personal development. On the other hand, if he does not have a job that matches his expectations, he may need to be remotivated, his confidence restored, so that he can make better use of what he has already achieved and can move up the ladder. A young person who has lost his bearings must first renew his social links and/or find a way of life that more or less complies with the 'norm' before he can envisage vocational integration.

The three points raised in this section, then, should be taken into account to a varying extent depending on the individual's personal life and development. They reflect the three types of knowledge or expertise that an individual must acquire to facilitate vocational integration:

- self-knowledge and self-recognition (self-esteem),
- knowledge of the world around him and his place in society,
- knowledge of the working world and the likelihood that he can compete on this market.

There is a logical order in the presentation of these points, although it should be borne in mind that they are closely linked and that they interact: a person without much self-confidence but who enjoys social recognition will gradually acquire confidence through the image of himself reflected back by others. In the same way, an outsider parachuted into a job in an unfamiliar environment will in the end create an identity for himself from his work and by building up a working and social networks, even a network of friends.

Not everyone necessarily goes through these three stages, or needs all the services discussed here to the same extent. Nevertheless, in the present economic situation, it is likely that everyone at some time or another can derive advantage from this type of service.

2.1.1. The personal dimension: encouraging self-esteem and determination

As a recommendation, there is a prerequisite here which is beyond the control of advisory measures: people have to make themselves known if they are to be counselled. But the key word is still motivation or, more commonly, remotivation.

For a young person entering the working world, failing to find a job is often seen as tantamount to rejection and exclusion. He has no money, no right to consume, no adult status. He will lose status in his own eyes and rapidly cut himself off from society unless he receives help and is given the necessary confidence to face reality with greater equanimity, to be-

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come a part of the world around him and to take responsibility for his own future.

This work of personal mobilisation relates to the three target groups identified in the first section[9]. It is the prerequisite for any integration and any project, even if it is not work-related.

Although at first sight it may be difficult to relate strictly personal characteristics – like self-esteem and self-confidence – and entering the labour market, this initial form of aid provided by counselling units is vital, as it is the first contact and the starting point for every other measure.

One of the first steps for counselling and guidance units and the various bodies in the field, then, is to take the time to listen and talk. The next step is to draw up a more or less formal audit of the person's competences (Box 3) and plans in order find out at least what he has achieved and the way he perceives those achievements so that he can build up his confidence and faith in his potential.

Whatever the standard of education and competitive ability of the individual on the labour market, the present economic situation and economic difficulties often mean that, after a few unsuccessful attempts to find a job or merely after rejection, he just gives up and goes down in his own estimation, not just in terms of work but above all as a person.

Most of the CEDEFOP reports (see bibliography) refer to this state of affairs. Young people are more likely to be unemployed or in temporary jobs than older people. To avoid unemployment, some of them defer the time of moving on from education to a job and extend their studies after the period of compulsory education. The choice is not always entirely deliberate, but often arises from a fear of unemployment and the idea that training has the advantage of leading to a better first job. This is true, even though the move is not always one way (from education or training to employment), and now more rarely than ever does it lead directly to a secure job. The absence of an appropriate economic base which may ensue from extended studies may in fact delay the acquisition of financial independence and personal autonomy – the diploma of adulthood! Youngsters will then also put off the time of leaving the family home, starting families of their own and assuming responsibility for their actions and their own lives.

The role of counselling and guidance services is then essentially to encourage active citizenship (see 3.1.2.), make the youngsters take steps on their own

[9] Marginalised people to be (re)integrated, those in the process of marginalisation and the 'apparently problem-free'.

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account, participate in rewarding activities even if they are unpaid, evaluate their own potential and decide together on their plans for the future and practical ways of implementing those plans. Neighbourhood councils, local missions, etc., are better placed than anyone else in this field to gauge the personality of a young person coming to them and to indicate what steps are needed to remobilise and acquire fresh motivation and confidence.

The steps taken do not automatically lead to a job. Many services take the precaution of briefing their users on what they can expect to achieve.

The French report on the northern districts of Marseilles (CIBC, 1996), in discussing the local initiative entitled 'Action mobilisation jeunes – métiers du spectacle', launched in 1995, clearly states that:

'Young people are warned against the 'illusions' that they might form as regards the term 'entertainment'. They are not being trained for qualifications in the arts, even technical qualifications, since a very high level of skill is required in this field, . . . but this context must be used for the purpose of imparting dynamic impetus and finding a job . . through the work of self-discovery in the world of the arts, in other words an entirely different environment'. (p. 54)

The priority of the measures designed to promote self-esteem should be to reach people classified as marginalised and in need of reintegration, since integration in society and the working world must be based on reconstruction of oneself. It is hard, however, to provide this aid and support to the very people who need it most: youngsters who have lost their bearings and have no fixed abode just because they no longer belong to any network or neighbourhood or structure that really serves their needs. As stated in the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions Eurocounsel final report (Watt, 1997), in discussing the long-term unemployed, better results are achieved when the services are not compulsory, even though an element of obligation may be useful as it could encourage a person who has lost all his motivation to return to a form of useful activity.

The issue here, then, is for the young person to take the time to come to terms with himself and with the outside world (something that should be viewed in conjunction with the next point, 2.1.2), through positive experiences. For instance, he could construct a plan and embark on a route – one that will lead to work (see 2.1.3.).

2.1.2. Networking

However effective the effort to intermediate on the labour market or in matters of advice and guidance, people must be helped to discern and activate their own networks. The way personal networks are mobilised very often determines whether a person is integrated into the working world, and always determines integration in society.

This question of establishing networks follows naturally on the previous chapter. Once an individual has forged his own identity, has constructed himself, has acquired self-assurance, it is equally necessary that he is able to gain recognition for those qualities in his society.

In turn, the creation of social networks promotes a good self-image and helps a person go even further. Self-confidence and confidence in his own potential, however, are not always enough to enter the working world, and the need for outside help may be evident. The creation of networks on the initiative of vocational support, counselling and guidance services may be effective along these lines.

School-leavers often have no experience of the labour market, or even any concept of the means whereby they can gain access to it. The 'training = employment' equation is no longer true, and diplomas and qualifications are not always sufficient for social and occupational self-fulfilment. Education – especially general education – is usually dispensed in hermetically sealed surroundings, without any real contact with the workplace and the working world, and young people rarely have a foretaste of what awaits them. They need to go outside for help. And even if a young person is trained for a job – as clearly shown by the national reports (especially the Belgian report, Ouali et al., 1994) – the link between the training that has been received and the job ultimately found is very weak.

A person will first turn to family networks (as testified in particular by the Belgian and the Irish national reports - Ouali et al., 1994, and McCarthy, 1994). Even so, the more economically disadvantaged the family a person comes from, the narrower and less operative will the network be. Here we find the system of social reproduction widely described by sociologists. The same system is found, moreover, at every level. The Danish national report (Maaløe, 1994) states, for example, that a third of young people are on the labour market with a school qualification but not a vocational qualification, and those who are from unskilled or unemployed families are over-represented

in this group. The counselling and guidance units may in many cases act as intermediaries, as bridges, between the young person, his social milieu and the labour market.

This social integration and networking is especially important when young people have 'an image that does not export well outside the place where they live', as the French report on the Marseilles case study puts it (CIBC, 1996).

One of the most interesting examples is the mentoring system to be found in the northern districts of Marseilles (Box 4). Based on the same principle as apprentice-masters in apprenticeship, this consists of giving an adult – in this case someone who is retired – the responsibility of helping and guiding young people at risk of marginalisation in their personal and working lives. The 'parrain', or 'godfather', as he is known here is in a sense half way between an institution and the family. He has more time to spare than any formal structure and can pass on the benefit of his experience in the working world and in the network he has created for himself over the years. With this mentoring, support and advice, the young person acquires what could be regarded as 'norms of behaviour' that make him more socially acceptable. He rapidly builds up his own personal or even working network, adding to the likelihood of rapid and satisfactory integration.

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For the individual to benefit from the help of counselling and guidance services in creating a personal network, those structures must themselves have worked on forming such links. They are of various kinds, for example links with the authorities and local communities or the local labour market through employers (see 3.2.2.).

2.1.3. Making the best use of what one has learned

Helping young people to persuade potential employers is a vital factor. Few people are recruited to the kind of job that corresponds to the special field for which they have been trained. Jobs are so scarce that accepting a post that does not make use of one's skills is an option that should not necessarily be dismissed. On the other hand, young people must be persuaded to waste no time in making their competences known. Above all, those who have had technical or vocational training must also know how to make good use of what they have learned.

To offset the problems associated with employment and the difficulties of entering the working world, vari-

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ous Education Ministries have been attempting for years, it seems, with a greater or lesser degree of success, to adapt school education to today's world, in which employment is in even shorter supply and more fragmented. This effort to adapt does not always bear fruit, and in many cases there is still a wide gap between what has been taught and what potential employers expect. Schools rarely provide a 'user's manual' for the labour market and, in the same way, a school-leaver is seldom 'job-ready'.

One of the main difficulties encountered by young people on their arrival on the labour market is how to put over what they have achieved. This is a vital factor for people who have few qualifications to offer. It is also valuable to the people we have classified as 'apparently problem-free'.

The Irish national report (McCarthy, 1994), for example, points out that many young people have high levels of education and qualifications – the only realistic grounds for hoping to establish oneself firmly in the working world. Even so, the education received and diplomas obtained are not advanced enough or close enough to the needs and demands of the labour market to make it easy for them to obtain employment. This means that, after secondary education, they may well sign up for other educational courses or adult education or work experience programmes. This 'extra' training is for many people a way of avoiding or at least deferring unemployment. It is seen more as a 'waiting room' for a job rather than as providing real hopes of additional training – although it does promote the better use of what has already been acquired.

Apart from this question of the sometimes blatant mismatch between education and employment, with the young person not having received the skills and expertise from which he might have benefited, the types of education whose primary purpose is to impart a particular occupational skill have to an extent depreciated in value. In general, vocational education is rarely a first choice for a young person, and for this reason is widely under-valued.

The Luxembourg national report (Fandel, Pauwels, 1994), for example, clearly shows that those who take up an apprenticeship after the ninth year of education do so because they did not obtain high enough grade to go on to the tenth year. Most of CEDEFOP's studies also point to the same finding, especially the French, Greek and Netherlands reports (CIBC, 1996; Zanni-Teliopoulou, Stathakopoulou, 1995; Wijnaendts van Resandt, 1994)'

The distinction all too often made between general education and technical and vocational education leads to a value judgement that is detrimental to a young person who has opted for the technical/vocational streams. He lacks confidence in his own worth and finds it hard to convey his merits, to 'sell himself'. He will also make a negative association between vocational guidance and his current situation and with educational selection, and therefore his exclusion from the educational system.

On the other hand, those in general education enjoy greater recognition (the reason why they are often overlooked by guidance units). Even so, many people leave school before completing their secondary education and without any preparation for work or a vocational qualification, which in the end puts them at a particular disadvantage at the time of entering the working world unless they can find a way of optimising and adding to the knowledge they have already acquired.

Counselling and guidance services have envisaged various projects to help young people make good use of their experience, or at least their knowledge. Allowance is obviously made for the level already obtained and the individual's potential and realistic prospects of upward mobility.

At an early stage, one of the initiatives that may, among other things, help young people to become aware of their own value and potential could be the skills audit and portfolio of competences (Box 3), which at the least helps to 'review' what has been achieved and what one might hope to do with that achievement.

Box 3

Audits and portfolios of competences

The personal and vocational audit is a dynamic, targeted and global measure. Its form and content are dictated by the goal pursued, i.e. the social and vocational integration of an individual, enabling him or her to satisfy personal aspirations and make a contribution to economic, cultural and social development.

In an audit as much information as possible about oneself is gathered, and then a good hard look is taken at the conclusions, thinking about what resources should be used to construct and implement one's plans for social and vocational integration.

The phases of the audit are arranged to fit in with each beneficiary's special needs.

In the investigatory phase, the aim is to 'discern and identify the individual's experience and intellectual and occupational potential, and evaluate his personal and vocational competence in terms of knowledge, expertise and attitudes' so that he can later 'build up a set of relevant factors that may make a vocational and personal project more feasible and organise priorities of actions and strategies for the realisation of the goals he has set himself in the short and medium term'.

The portfolio of competences is a tool that sets a continuing process in motion: the young person is encouraged to continue with the analysis, and to collect and keep evidence of his experience, which in turn causes him to take a different view of the route he is taking and to set greater store by it.

Source: CIBC Marseilles – Centre interinstitutionnel de bilans de compétences (1996).

When the difficulty arises of obtaining a permanent job, this portfolio of competences helps the young person to put together a coherent account of his experience, or at least to show it to its best advantage however fragmented.

The same process is to be found with adults, as pointed out by Hurley (1994) in discussing a case study in Italy. The subject is the use of a vocational audit to reinforce participants' individual motivation by identifying ways of making people more 'marketable'. Along the same lines is the 'jobseeker's diary' scheme in Barcelona (Hurley, 1994).

Periods abroad are often presented as enhancing skills already acquired and enriching them through new experiences. The better qualified are more likely to go abroad – no doubt because they already have more self-confidence or because travel to other countries is more customary in their family or social environment (the theory of cultural capital). CEDEFOP's consolidated report on determining the need for vocational counselling among different target groups of young people under 28 years of age in the European Community (Chisholm, 1994) points out that for many people, especially the least skilled, this provides an opportunity to convert negative social situations into positive experience and prospects. It appears that adding a European dimension to a young person's experience helps to give credibility to the experience he has acquired in the eyes of an employer. Even so, it should be borne in mind that young people do not envisage lengthy periods abroad and usually try to construct a life plan in their own national or regional or more local environment,

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the aim being greater stability and security in their futures.

Good initial training and better presentation of one's achievements and skills should help to reduce the risk of youth unemployment and exclusion. But successful integration in society and the working world no longer implies working for the same company for life. For instance, a person may, either by choice or by constraint, of his own free will or due to adverse economic conditions, still have to face transition problems all through his life.

Although the question of how young people can enter the labour market is important and should not be overlooked by the authorities, the issue of transition is just as likely to improve or prejudice an adult's prospects, and deserves the particular attention of the authorities and the vocational support, counselling and guidance services.

2.2. The question of reintegration

When it comes to occupational reintegration, it is no longer just young people who are involved. The wide variety of groups affected means that measures must be differentiated according to far more criteria. Paradoxically, there should no longer be any doubt about the value of preceding actual recruitment by job-related activities – voluntary or socially useful work – which help to establish a working rhythm and a proper attitude to work.

The question of occupational reintegration is far more specific to adults who have already had a job but have lost it. The reasons may be many and varied. They may have been made redundant by a company going out of business or by the downsizing of a workforce. A craftsman or the owner of a small business may have become insolvent. It is also a problem for people who have taken early retirement, or housebound women who have given up work to bring up their children and find it hard to return to a job once they have shed some of their family responsibilities, etc.

The primary stated objective is still to combat unemployment and to promote equal opportunities. Various national policies advocate different ways of tackling the problem. In some countries, the priority is placed on what have been called methods of 'activation' [10] (see 3.1.2.); in others, it is on social employment programmes (see 2.2.2.) or the granting of subsidies to employers for taking on unemployed people, or both at the same time. One of the key solutions is to invest in vocational training and to develop a policy designed to promote lifelong training. 'Refreshing' and updating skills are vital here, and information and counselling services advocate this process of continuing education and training. The purpose of advice, then, is to give people as a minimum the tools they will need to cope with the various transitions in their working lives.

Finding a full-time paid job may be the outcome of counselling, but for certain participants this will not necessarily be the end objective. There is a need, then, to formulate various measures in response to the wide variety of groups affected by long-term unemployment: they may be young people, especially those with few diplomas or none, women, older workers, etc.

But, although the situations encountered by these different types of people differ, the consequences are often the same. Whether they are temporary unemployed, long-term unemployed or in early retirement, the immediate observation is that they feel badly about their situation and have at one and the same time lost their working, personal and social points of reference. Obviously, efforts must be made to remedy the problem in the light of each individual situation. The response will differ depending on the age, needs, living conditions, experience, knowledge and expertise of each group, but in all cases the support, counselling and guidance services must be able to reduce the risk of exclusion and/or self-marginalisation and to help a person regain a social role – through a job-related activity, paid or unpaid, that will give access, or fresh access, to a better quality of life.

2.2.1. Reacquiring a social role

Here the main recommendation is to help people regain a feeling of being useful. Working in the voluntary sector is in line with this thinking.

This expedient, whose aim is to confer a new social role, is above all presented as a process of socialisation or resocialisation. It will be directed as a priority towards marginalised people who need to be reintegrated or, more probably, those who are unlikely to be able to return to the labour market or who do not have a vital need to do so, as in the case of people retiring early. Some will also place in this group homebound women who are not heads of households. People need help first of all with emerging from their isolation and regaining confidence in themselves, becoming 'useful' once again and creating a network of personal relationships. To a great extent this personal and social reconstruction is achieved by participating in a work-related activity, or several, depending on a person's specific needs and circumstances, through the voluntary sector.

[10] Basically the term is used in Denmark (Hurley, 1994).

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2.2 Facilitating transition (social, personal and/or occupational)

This concept of voluntary work may be poorly received or even rejected by people with pressing financial needs, but it is one of the main occupations suggested to people who have retired early and find it somewhat hard to drop out entirely from the working world but have sufficient income to meet their day-to-day needs.

Voluntary work may take different forms and relate to several types of activity, sometimes in very different sectors. The case of the 'mentors' in the northern districts of Marseilles has been mentioned in this connection. The action is described in Box 4.

Box 4

'Parrainage'

This arrangement is the outcome of a partnership between CIRRSE – Caisse interprofessionnelle de retraite par répartition du sud est – and the local mission for the 15th and 16th districts of Marseilles, following the creation of the 'Générations solidarités' association in 1993.

Retired people from every occupational sector are willing to act, without pay, as mentors to young unemployed people and other youngsters in difficulty. The idea is to mobilise the older person's experience of life and human relations and place it at the service of young people at risk of marginalisation.

In no way does this voluntary work imply amateurism. Eighteen retired people have already 'worked' in the northern districts of Marseilles and have acted as mentors to 147 youngsters.

They can use facilities on premises with office equipment, computers, Minitel, etc., and undergo training in the 'skilled trade' of mentoring, so that they can find the best response to the needs of the youngster whom they decide to take on, with the help of the local mission. The training is in the form of five modules, in half-day sessions, covering youth integration measures, the problems of disadvantaged districts, young people's difficulties and exclusion and what they need to do to monitor their 'godchild'. The work team tries to match the vocational route taken by a young person and his or her aspirations with the mentor's life experience.

Mentoring lasts an average of three to six months, with the older and younger person meeting once or twice a week.

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The mentor's main contribution is to instil confidence. This is done by giving advice and moral support, for example technical help with producing a curriculum vitae or a letter of application. Another task is to help the person about to enter the labour market to present himself better, for instance through role-playing and simulating job interviews so that the youngster creates a good impression. Here again, the mentor needs to the extent possible to build up a set of references for the youngster so that he will be thoroughly familiar with the working world and how a company operates, know more about the nature of the various departments in a company, how to look at a pay slip or a contract of employment, etc. He also does his best to use his own network of relationships on behalf of the young person.

In certain more challenging cases, mentors attend meetings of the local technical committees to brief them on the young person's progress. They regularly fill in forms to inform the local mission of the steps being taken and changes in the young person's attitude.

Apart from the fact of creating a social link that will enable different generations to understand each other and provide mutual support, the results appear encouraging. The retired people gain a sense of being useful, the young ones acquire greater confidence and seem to find it easier to obtain work. This measure has now become part of the 'Youthstart' programme and may be transferred to certain other countries in the European Community, Ireland and Finland in particular.

Source: CIBC, 1996.

If full-time employment is no longer a realistic aspiration and the practical likelihood of finding a job again is virtually nil, it seems that voluntary work can provide an occupation which, while not gainful employment, may well be personally enriching. The aim above all is to activate citizens and encourage them to take up a varied range of activities, so that they can cope better with the transitions of life (see section 3). This work may also be to convey the benefit of one's own experience to others.

Although this type of activity is essentially the province of those who have taken early retirement and for whom a return to paid work is out of the question, it is also suggested to people whose absolute priority is to re-establish human relationships before going ahead with the process of occupational reintegration. This measure is of value provided that the individual does not forfeit unemployment benefits, etc. It helps him to acquire some discipline, since even voluntary work makes certain demands in terms of attendance, stamina and the acceptance of personal responsibility. It is obvious, however, that this should not be seen as a long-term activity for people who really need a paid job. Besides voluntary work – or after a period of voluntary work – other steps should be taken to help a person return to the working world and society. Sometimes it is the voluntary work itself which may lead to retraining and a return to the working world.

This concept features in particular in the case of CILOs – local employment initiatives in Piedmont in Italy – where, backed by a small core of permanent staff who are trained in giving advice, very many voluntary workers are also active. They undertake a short training course in providing support to the adviser, which they can subsequently extend if they wish. A more or less similar system exists in Spain with the Fundació Trinijove in Barcelona – a young people's mutual aid organisation – which is run on a charitable basis, mainly by people who, after taking part in certain activities as users, identify with the work being done and offer their services as leaders (in periods of work experience, for example).

2.2.2. Temporary reintegration

Public policy measures on employment also have a place in this context. They should be seen as a transition phase, for example in the move towards employment or towards retirement.

In this chapter on temporary reintegration, several types of measure may be considered by an individual and by the occupational support, counselling and guidance services. They are not all on the same level. This very broad set of measures may include periods of work experience – paid or unpaid – and social work, temporary replacement work within a company or organisation, training courses, which may or may not lead to a qualification, or brief periods of work or training abroad.

Clearly a paid work placement cannot be treated on a par with an unpaid placement. In the same way, a training course that leads to a qualification will have a different impact and be more highly regarded than a course that does not. Even so, such measures in general and social work in particular often serve as the first step towards employment. More and more it is accepted that social employment is a necessary stage in reintegrating the long-term unemployed on the labour market.

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Even though a work placement is not always paid, it very often enables a person to establish, or rediscover, the pace of work and a certain discipline. Social employment is a more direct part of programmes of 'public utility work', as established by governments, and is associated with which has been called 'the intermediate labour market'.

Neither type of work will always offer the hope of moving up the ladder, but sometimes they help by providing fresh experience of which an individual can make good use later on. The group that benefits from these measures is varied: the long-term unemployed, or women who want to or have to return to work, or young people, most of whom are low-skilled or unskilled. Social employment may also be a stage in the transition to retirement.

This is one aspect of the services provided by counselling and labour mobility management described in the case study on the province of Trento in Italy (Hurley, 1994), where what are regarded as 'socially useful jobs' have been created, the aim being to make use of the surrounding resources for older unemployed people. The workers are employed by cooperatives until they reach the minimum retirement age.

The occupational support, counselling and guidance services must in all cases be capable of offering the best possible advice to individuals on the prospects open to them and to the likelihood that they will lead to vocational integration.

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The problem that arises here, if it is a problem, is that the value of this type of measure is to restore a person's self confidence, enable him to return to a working situation and obtain sufficient qualifications to adapt to it, but it must above all provide access to a stable, satisfying post. As pointed out in the Irish report (McCarthy, 1994), going to counselling and guidance services and following their recommendations are useful only if there is a prospect of a job at the end; if not, it is just a waste of time. But current conditions on the labour market and the fact that counselling practitioners often know too little about the local market mean that a job is not always a certainty – far from it.

One particular initiative caught our attention in this respect: the VUS in Fakse in Denmark. It has the advantage of providing additional training for those in work and at the same time offers work experience to the unemployed (Box 5).

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Box 5

Rotation of employment and training
The case of the VUS in Denmark

This State-funded programme enables employees, particularly those with a low level of education, to take general adult education courses and vocational training for 4 to 36 weeks.

During this study and training sabbatical, participants receive a Government weekly grant. In many cases, to ensure that there is no loss of earnings, the employers make compensatory payments to top up the pay of the person being trained.

Simultaneously, the workers being trained are replaced by the long-term unemployed, who are paid the same as the person for whom they are standing in.

This employment rotation formula has several advantages: :

the long-term unemployed acquire work experience which may perhaps be put to use later on;

the employee obtains training, which may help him in his advancement;

employers obtained better qualified and more motivated workers.

Source: Hurley, 1994.

Initiatives combining advice and guidance with social employment programmes like those developed in Ireland (Hurley, 1994; McCarthy, 1994) have also shown the benefits that can be derived from such measures. They give a person renewed self-confidence and a chance to attend training or general courses as well as possibly opening the door to fresh prospects, for instance retraining for a different job or for self-employment.

2.2.3. Reintegration in a different setting

Again with the idea of broadening the range of opportunities, the jobs market must not be the sole focus of interest; encouragement must be given to seeking out new opportunities. Setting up one's own business is a possible route.

Apart from attempting to help people to re-enter the working world and take up a job that already exists and that has been vacant or falls vacant, support, counselling and guidance units may also have the role of encouraging private initiative and the creation of new enterprise and jobs.

This encouragement for finding new opportunities outside the traditional labour market is one aspect of the service that seems to pose problems for many practitioners, and it is a question that will be considered in the part on their training and functions (see 3.2.4.). Very many practitioners feel they are not in a position to provide such services as they lack the appropriate knowledge; they specialise more in training or job placement than in business creation, even though this is also an alternative way of returning to work.

The Spanish case study (especially the study by the Fundació Trinijove in Barcelona) carried out under the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions Eurocounsel programme (Watt, 1997), reviews the services and support that exist in abundance for people wanting to start up their own businesses. Counselling takes the form of providing information that will help to solve the practical problems that arise when one wants to set up on one's own, and in some cases training in business management (although this is usually restricted to those holding diplomas in management and economics rather than the unemployed). The practitioners often know too little about the local market and do not have enough practical information on the situation and industry of the future to offer really effective support.

This type of project, however, seems to be growing in favour with the authorities. As it is often difficult to 'jump in at the deep end' (for financial, practical and other reasons), certain countries have set up a system under which people can become self-employed but still be entitled to their social and various other benefits, at least for the first year. Other countries, such as Denmark, the United Kingdom and Germany, also offer financial support programmes designed to help the unemployed set up their own businesses.

This is also the case in the province of Trento in Italy, where the employment centre is trying to promote job creation by granting subsidies and other services to support people wishing to set up on their own account, either creating small businesses or working in partnership with others (in cooperatives for example). These various programmes, including in particular the programme of grants for the creation of regional enterprises (AAES), tend to be run by regional undertakings and the Ministry for Social Protection. In many cases here the advisory units act as catalysts, or more simply as mediators.

2

Facilitating transition (social, personal and/or occupational)

Apart from job creation and offering the opportunity of self-employment (although in the province of Trento this has applied to only 3% of ex-unemployed people), this chapter on integration in a different setting or vocational retraining could also include all the measures promoting training for different kinds of work and changes in the direction of the skills acquired or to be acquired.

We have already touched on one of the problems for which people seek occupational support, counselling and guidance: before suggesting training or a retraining course in a particular sector, it is vital that the practitioners should have been able to assess the situation on the local labour market and the opportunities that might be created there. They also need to be capable of evaluating the motivation and competence of individuals so that they will opt for what is realistically a suitable solution for them. The confidence-building and audits of competence that we have already discussed are often among the first steps to be taken, perhaps the starting point in any approach.

This is an example provided by the case study on Postalmarket in Milan (Hurley, 1994). The concept is even more innovatory in that it was created on the initiative of the company itself and to an extent by its employees. (Box 6).

Box 6

Encouraging a change in activities
The case of Postalmarket

Postalmarket is a mail order company going through a period of major financial difficulties, which means that it has to make staff redundant and alter the work it does. A preventive advisory unit has been set up within the company to do what it can for the future of its employees, training them and directing them towards a different kind of job that would meet their needs and be within their capability.

The first phase has been to help them to arrive at a self-assessment of their skills and expertise, and to assert their identities by pinpointing their working activities and experience.

The next step is jointly to produce an occupational audit, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses so that they can launch into a process of vocational training directed towards a placement on the company's own internal market or another job on the outside market, with the help of a work grant.

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At first this process made relatively heavy weather. Some people agreed to go to outside recruitment interviews but changed their minds at the last moment. During the first phase, it was noted that stereotyped ideas, fear and ingrained habits prevailed and that attitudes were very conservative. It was also found difficult to teach workers to take decisions, assess themselves and clearly identify their work experience and expertise – they were not accustomed to such analytical processes.

Nevertheless, after advice, help with producing CVs, information on labour market legislation, the seeking out of opportunities and the imparting of motivation by some of the company's employees who succeeded in mobilising the personnel as a whole, the case study notes that in general, the attitude of all the participants in the programme changed radically. Many of them were starting to take steps for themselves, to look for work, and others wanted to return to studying (Hurley, 1994).

The process of retraining, then, seems to have been successfully launched for each party.

In the course of these two chapters, there are clear links between the various points covered, and therefore the services to be provided; it is also clear that the occupational support, counselling and guidance services – public or private – do not offer the same type of services and support as any official authority. Here we seem to be moving from what might at first seem a logic based on gateways to one that is based on projects.

There can be no one packaged solution to be offered to every person coming for help. There are general concepts (the 'Russian dolls' concept already described) and main courses of action to be taken depending on the overall position of the individual or target group in question, but apart from these general trends all the parameters of an individual's personal, social and working life must be taken into account in order to provide whatever service is best suited to each person's particular situation. The solutions and recommendations to be offered are directed along these lines.

3

Institutional solutions: personalising help, advice and guidance – looking ahead to the medium- or long-term future

3. Institutional solutions: personalising help, advice and guidance – looking ahead to the medium- or long-term future

The concept of prevention underlies every measure to help individuals not at immediate risk of unemployment or exclusion. This is a fairly recent approach internationally, coinciding with what the European Union sees as medium- or long-term actions, such as lifelong training or advice and assistance even for people who are in employment. For instance, appreciating the value of continuing training is in itself a protection against future risks of unemployment or being stuck in a dead-end job.

Among the recent issues, the private provision of advisory services highlights the funding of this form of intervention, and creates a risk that only people with sufficient financial resources have access to it.

In taking an overall look in this chapter at the problem of how vocational support, advice and guidance systems operate at European level and in institutional terms, methodological problems arise: it cannot be claimed that this study in itself is empirically exhaustive or of general application. Young Europeans, like their elders, are not socially, economically or culturally homogeneous groups. The target groups identified are themselves fairly permeable, each one facing widely differing situations in its own environment, the conditions for its development and success varying a good deal. Occupational support, advice and guidance systems within the European Union are also very diverse, even within the same region or town, and cannot easily be transferred from one context to another. Such services cannot therefore avail themselves of a universally applicable policy; they cannot be based on generally applicable models or provide simple, straightforward results and solutions that all point in the same direction.

Within this economic, social and cultural diversity, however, there do seem to be recurring themes and problems, valid procedures that deserve to be highlighted and particular shortcomings to be tackled, and these should help with the formulation of strategies for the development of such services and with creating a Community policy on education, training, integration and access or return to employment or any other job-related activity. The purpose of this policy should be to reach the greatest number of people, to raise levels of skills among manual workers, improve the quality of life and help to combat the precarious nature of work, unemployment and marginalisation. While the policy should be formulated in general

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terms at European and national level, in its subsequent implementation it should be adapted to regional and local contexts.

Among the general recommendations set out here, one is that these services must be more within the reach of individuals and look at a person's social context; employment, training and special and one-off help should no longer be considered as unrelated to other aspects of life. No doubt there is a need to improve even further the image of education and training – especially technical and vocational – and to promote the ongoing assessment of what the services provide and how they adapt to the needs and demands of all parties, including those under Europe-wide programmes. Lastly, these services and what they provide need to be given a fresh status: they should not be first-aid measures for social monitoring and managing people, brought to bear once a problem has taken root, but a lifelong mentoring activity. Because of this, the recommendations must put forward a more global, positive, personalised, multidisciplinary and active approach, as will be discussed more specifically in the chapters that follow.

Given the impossibility of guaranteeing access to employment, it is clear – as already pointed out at the start of this document – that the services need to evolve in line with social realities and each person's individual type of needs. If they cannot cure, their objective must be to prevent and be part of an educational process directed towards the personal development of each individual.

3.1. Improving services at individual level

For a more détailed analysis of a person's particular situation and to help plan the most suitable forms of help, counselling needs to be both local and personalised.

As has been emphasised throughout the preceding chapters, no one response will be right for everyone. Every case is special and must be treated as such. The overriding problem to be taken into consideration is that of a return to normal society, a job-related activity, paid or unpaid, training – whether or not it leads to a qualification – and a socially useful job or more stable (re)integration into employment.

Virtually every case is unique and the contexts – social, economic, cultural or environmental – can be seen as a series of variables affecting the position of individuals and the options for their progress and development. For instance, although global policies are needed to lay down general guidelines, obviously it will be far easier for those at grass roots to assess the needs of the individuals – those who seek help, those who come to the services or those who will not come but whose needs can be met by occupational support, counselling and guidance services. This proximity also provides a better picture of the local situation and makes meetings easier in that it reduces the distance to be travelled. It is likely that in any given area there will be fewer people to be catered for, so that they can be reached more readily and will find it easier to reach the services.

The changes in living conditions and the place of young people and adults in society and the economy imply that not only must existing principles and practices be refined but also the occupational advice and guidance bodies must rethink the services they provide, their methods, objectives and goals. Rather than reacting they must become pro-active (see 3.1.4.); they must help the individual to become in turn someone who is active and autonomous (see 3.1.1.); and they must be able to forestall risks (of unemployment, exclusion, discouragement, etc.) and to the extent possible act before events occur (see 3.1.4.). Lastly, they need to broaden their horizons (see 3.2.2.), create cooperative relations with informal networks, social partners, companies, employers, etc., and incorporate transition – from education to employment or from unemployment or from one job to another job – into broader personal and social contexts, offering aid and support that are both more personal and more global (see 3.1.3.).

The few recommendations made in the chapters that follow are those that occur most frequently in the various reports (see Bibliography) – both those commissioned by CEDEFOP and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, based on the findings of the Eurocounsel research-action. They are derived from observations of initiatives that have faltered or that are not entirely satisfactory, for which a remedy needs to be found and for which solutions may even at this point be envisaged. The points covered are not exhaustive and are not the only changes that should be made to existing systems, but they are at least the most pressing and those whose benefits will become most rapidly apparent.

3.1.1. Personalised help

Personalising aid helps the practitioner to analyse the situation of a person coming to him in greater detail. This also builds up the person's confidence in the soundness and effectiveness he can expect from the options suggested.

3

Institutional solutions:
personalising help, advice and guidance – looking ahead to the medium- or long-term future

In the first few pages of this document, we mentioned the measures to combat unemployment and exclusion as a means of 'curing' or at least helping people who have suffered from these ills, some of which are due to their disadvantaged personal situation at the start but are also often due to changing economic circumstances. Being unemployed has both a very personal and individual dimension and a highly social dimension. While major measures are needed, personalised help is just as valuable. In offering a quality service, there can be no question of confining oneself to a standard service.

Ten minutes on the other side of a counter, doing little more than give someone a bunch of forms to fill in, is no indication of the interest that a practitioner will devote to a case and does not afford the satisfaction of taking responsibility or providing support that will help to improve a person's unfortunate situation. Whether the person is a school-leaver who does not know where to turn or an adult who has been made redundant, the most pressing need is for someone who will listen, think about the situation and analyse in detail all the factors leading up to the situation, as well as someone who can assess potential with a view to improving the person's situation and helping him to emerge from this adverse state of affairs.

One of the first recommendations to emerge from the various documents consulted, then, is to personalise the advice and guidance.

This growing attention to the individual is necessary – and even indispensable – both for the practitioner who, being the one who knows the individual best, will be better able to choose the most appropriate ways of improving his situation, and for the individual himself as, in feeling that he has someone to talk to, he will acquire more confidence and may even be encouraged to do as much as he can to improve his own situation (3.1.2.), knowing that someone is taking care of him, is taking his case into consideration and is trying to help him.

When these transition periods have to be faced, the services and action programmes set up by major institutions such as schools – in the case of young people – or national employment centres – in the case of adults – are not challenged. They meet national needs and because of this are firmly legitimised, in that they represent a measure of social cohesion. They are necessary – but perhaps not always sufficient.

This listening and personalised help can be successfully provided only in the confined framework of local

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structures, which obviously reflect the major national and European directives but may also act and react according to the immediate local context and the more intimate knowledge of the person needing help. In addition, it is not just a matter of determining the intellectual or vocational potential of an individual so that he can achieve permanent and satisfying (re)integration; careful thought should also be devoted to his experience outside work and his personal tastes, in order to arrive at a clear definition of his wishes and experience as well as the obstacles that may have to be overcome.

This more active personalisation helps above all to gain the confidence of the individual, making him feel that the services set up will take his needs into account and will make the maximum effort to find an appropriate solution for his case and his present situation. It also helps to define all a person's characteristics, his past, his present, his origins and his character (so that he can be viewed in his social setting), his achievements and his shortcomings (especially educational and training), his motivations, prospects and plans for the future. Obviously all this will be the starting point for any efforts to provide help and advice. It is through knowing who a person is that one can envisage what he might become.

The concept underlying the Tallaght Partnership in Ireland (Box 7) is of great interest in this respect. It defines three degrees of intervention, and the results achieved seem to justify the value of 'flexible' methods that vary according to the personality and characteristics of the users.

Box 7

The guidance service in the Tallaght Centre in Dublin

The philosophy of this guidance scheme is based on a concept of self-determination. The guidance is non-directive and client-focused, the aim being to meet the individual's needs. Besides the group discussions, one-to-one meetings between the participant and the counsellor are preferred.

Given that the guidance is client-focused, its content varies from one person to another.

With some people, all that is needed is to provide good quality information to help them identify the opportunities for training and learning.

Others need to receive far more advice and counselling in order to discover what suits them best and to define their own job aspirations.

A third guidance method is for people lacking the self-confidence to retrain or to opt to go back to their studies, or who question the value of retraining. In such cases, what are needed are guidance, counselling and more personal support.

The fact that the service can adapt to the individual needs of participants is obviously one of the strengths of this initiative. This flexibility of response to the demands of users has already led to very positive results.

Four months after the end of the guidance scheme, more than half of the participants had a job, almost a quarter were attending adult education courses or continuing training or were taking part in other job programmes, and fewer than a fifth were still unemployed.

Sources: Hurley, 1994

Special facilities have already been launched to increase the attention devoted to users. In 1995 the OECD was considering setting up a system under which at least one hour's individual counselling a month should be offered to every unemployed person (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions – Watt, 1997). The idea was agreeable and would obviously be beneficial if only it were achievable – which is not the case, as the services now operate[11]. It is still encouraging, however, and gives hope that efforts may in fact be made along these lines to ensure that everyone receives more attention.

This is also the criterion for the PIBE (personalised jobseeking plan) in Spain. The personalised jobseeking plan is based on a 'jobseeker's diary' (see Box 8), to be compiled in the course of efforts to find a job. This helps the adviser to monitor the individual's progress and provide appropriate help. One drawback of this service pointed out is that from the start it assumes that:

> 'only a certain number of registered unemployed really try to find a job or have the ability to achieve this. They are the ones, then, who merit particular attention' (Hurley, 1994, p. 121).

It is apparent here that there is a kind of selection which will inevitably work to the disadvantage of those who, despite everything, need special help, even if this does not point in the direction of lasting integration in the working world.

[11] The German public services and transport workers' union (ÖTV) has calculated that in future, advisers working for the national employment office will be able to devote an average of only three minutes to each client (Watt, 1997, p.44).

3

Institutional solutions: personalising help, advice and guidance – looking ahead to the medium- or long-term future

Besides the need to establish personalised help at a local level – i.e. closer to the individual – it is also vital, in the framework of measures designed to combat exclusion, not to confine support, counselling and guidance services to the transition period alone, whether this occurs immediately on leaving the educational system or at a later stage (see 3.1.3). What is also needed is to make sure that everyone can benefit from the services provided, and above all to help a person to discover for himself the path that suits him best.

3.1.2. The activation factor

The main role of services must be to provide a sort of mentoring activity. The need is to help the individual develop and apply strategies to improve his situation.

Although the vocational support, counselling and guidance services have the tools they need to provide the best possible information to the individual on ways of improving himself personally and vocationally, and although they have a dynamic role to perform in their relations with people under threat of redundancy, it is important for the stress to be placed on active citizenship and that their advice be regarded as directed above all to 'encouraging' the individual to make his own choices and take control of his own life.

The various consolidated documents and reports consulted (see Bibliography) show that one of the issues that needs to be stressed in the recommendations is helping the individual improve his lot (through his competences, qualifications, quality of life, etc.), but more by mobilising his own resources and ability to choose than by taking over complete responsibility for him (where necessary this can be done by the social security agencies). It is clear that the occupational support, counselling and guidance services are expected to set up the work of activation, encouragement to act and the mobilisation of the individual; and in no circumstances must they be or become managers of people's lives.

It is evident that many schemes have already been launched to persuade people to take the initiative in operations designed to improve the way they live. For example, this is the case of the jobseeker's diary in Barcelona (Box 8), a scheme set up by INEM, the national employment institute, through the PIBE – personalised jobseeking plan.

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Box 8

The jobseeker's diary

After an individual interview, the unemployed person is asked to keep a detailed record, to be filled in like a diary. This is subsequently used to explain, inform, motivate and guide the user on his own abilities, jobseeking techniques, etc.

This jobseeker's diary means that an individual has to make a special effort to set out logically, in writing, his abilities and methods of looking for a job, under the constant supervision of specialists from the agencies who are specifically assigned to this task.

He must also go to the agency once a month to discuss his progress. If he is rejected by an employer – even though his background fits in with what is needed – he is required to give the reasons for rejection, so that the appropriate services can take steps to remedy the situation and improve the way he presents himself and puts over his good points, in order to increase his chances of success when the next opportunity arises.

Sources: Hurley, 1994

There is, however, one reservation that should be expressed: it is notable that the services in question achieve far better results when the measures set up are not in any way compulsory. Even so, an individual who has totally lost confidence (see the 'invisible' group of the marginalised needing reintegration) needs to be remotivated, and it is likely that the competent departments need to some extent to introduce an almost compulsory procedure to do this (see 3.1.4.). The distinction is sometimes retained.

This positive approach, one that needs to be adopted or improved by the vocational advice and guidance services and practitioners in an effort to activate the individual, must in practice take two directions:

> the first is individual, and focuses directly on the person with needs to be met by these services. The objective to be achieved, the measure to be set up, must not (except in extreme cases) consist of taking over responsibility for the individual completely; on the contrary, it must provide encouragement to act, to motivate a person to become (return to being) an independent citizen capable of constructing his own life and work plans, pursuing goals that he has set himself. The aim is to do so by taking an active part in his integration on the labour market or his reintegration in a social activity. The particular goal for the advisory service is to help the individual to discover, develop and apply strategies in order actively to deal with his situation, to include seeking local job creation and working opportunities in the unofficial economy. Here the ploy is to persuade the individual and influence his values rather than to impose an obligation of special measures. This avoids him being systematically treated like a 'victim' of the system.
>
> the second direction is far more collective and more directly associated with the way such advisory structures operate. To make the activation and self-mobilisation of an individual possible, the occupational support, counselling and guidance services must first have set up adequate liaison with the local community so that they can suggest certain bodies, companies, associations, etc. which might help the individual to acquire a social and/or occupational 'usefulness', activate his skills and take advantage of any opportunities to overcome his problems (this factor will be discussed more specifically in 3.2.2.).

On this subject of activation, certain reports also discuss the participation of clients, at the request of the aid bodies, in providing advice to their peers. Here the process comes full circle: it is admirable when individuals become active citizens and when the support and advice services adopt the initiative in mobilising the users: even though the client takes advantage of the support and advice, he also becomes a trainer and therefore a provider of help to others.

This is the case with the Maribo (Denmark) autonomous advisory group, Initiativgruppen (Hurley, 1994). It consists of unemployed people who have been given free access to a room in the job centre in the town. The Eurocounsel report published by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions describes how participants meet regularly to help each other, for example in finding a job and in using the services of a guidance counsellor where necessary to cover specific subjects (legal matters, etc.). Apart from the room made available to them, they can also use some of the equipment (telephone, photocopier, etc.). They offer mutual advice and counsel in the light of each one's experience. It appears that this activation of participants adds to their self-respect, builds up their confidence, including confidence in their lives in general, and helps them to perform a genuinely active role in taking responsibility for their own lives and even those of their peers.

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In the same way, the Self-Development Counselling Group of North Mayo in Ireland (McCarthy, 1994) has as its basic precept the non-duality of unemployment and employment. The unemployed and long-term unemployed are regarded as themselves being a 'resource'. The group's activities consist of channelling these resources towards cohesive social intervention. The group also consists of unemployed people being trained to teach the skills needed by other unemployed people, in other words to give mutual help. The transition from membership of the client group to the support group is fairly rapid. The aim is to enable all the members to deploy their own resources in participating in change and thereby achieve their potential for intervention in the processes of social exclusion.

A similar experiment has also been conducted in Thuringen in Germany (ALI programme), in which considerable encouragement is given for self-advice. Among the services made available are a specialist library on labour law, the display of job vacancies, discussion groups on trends in industry and employment, etc. It seems that this way of making information available encourages individuals to take their future in their own hands.

This wide dissemination of information has undoubtedly reached its maximum in the United Kingdom, with the STEPAhead in Aberdeen: this is very like a shop that provides – or in this case sells – advice and guidance, as well as a whole range of educational material, books and tapes, with which anyone can learn on his own, encouraging greater awareness of the potential benefits of training and studies.

Such non-directive guidance, which still leaves scope for greater self-determination, can exist side-by-side with an active organisation of occupational support, counselling and guidance services which, while looking ahead on individuals' behalf, essentially aims to forestall the problems that might arise in the absence of proper advice or services (3.2.4.).

Throughout this section it is in fact apparent that the role of occupational counselling and guidance services is to help the individual find his bearings and improve his conditions of life and work, but at the same time it is not necessarily its role – far from it – to assume responsibility for that individual. More and more, such services are regarded as being able to promote active employment measures and less and less as part of the social protection infrastructure (where the task is more to take over the financial, psychological and other aspects). It seems, then, that what is valued in these services and what is recom-

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mended for them is now far more their activity of lifelong mentoring.

3.1.3. The overall prospect: from one-off support to life plans

The aid and support work of counselling services should not be confined to occasional periods of occupational transition. The situation should be regarded in terms of one's whole life, taking all the other aspects of a person's life at and outside work into account as well.

Giving personalised help to an individual with a particular problem means that the problem can be more accurately identified, an inventory made of the person's achievements and potential and above all a clear idea formed of the disadvantage with which he has to cope and the most appropriate solution found (see 3.1.1.).

The process of guiding him and encouraging him to move forward through his own efforts to solve his problem (see 3.1.2.) may build up greater self-confidence and speed up his return to the working world and society.

One-off help, such as the help marshalled in the transition periods of an individual's life, often provides no more than a respite and in no way signifies total recovery or a better quality of life in the long term, even though this is one of the goals of the occupational support, counselling and guidance services.

Furthermore, the trend towards flexibility in employment makes it all too evident that an individual may have to face many transitions in his working life. He should be strongly recommended to take advantage of help and advice not just in reaction to a difficulty but of a preventive nature, spread out throughout his working life and even outside work.

Along the same lines, many case studies show that steps have already been taken in this direction. They also highlight the value of focusing sustained attention on the individual's environment, dealing with the general context of his life and achievements, for example by including psychological needs. This is shown by the example of the Mafalda centre (Box 9).

Box 9

Advice on every aspect of daily life: the example of the Mafalda centre

The Mafalda centre is a non-profit-making company in Graz in Austria whose primary mission is to help girls and young women to enter the labour market more easily, but it also offers a set of advice and more general services. These include:

'occupational' advice (vocational guidance and career planning),

'psychological/social' advice (family problems, financial, legal and housing problems, etc.),

'medical' advice (contraception, sexual problems, etc.).

Facilities for leisure activities are also offered.

The centre starts with the idea that people who have experienced long periods of unemployment often have complex and related problems. It is only logical that the centre should not confine itself to vocational counselling but should also include help with psychological, social and legal matters, etc.

The aim is to develop a comprehensive advisory service.

Source: Hurley, 1994.

Two separate types of transition have been discussed (section 2):

the transition faced by young people emerging from the educational system,

the transition faced by adults following a period of unemployment or in a move from one job to another.

One observation is evident: the service offered is often limited to a very specific situation or condition. The transition from education to employment, for example, is essentially covered by the school and vocational guidance departments within the educational system itself.

This raises certain problems since, in many cases, the role of the guidance services, as we are reminded by the French report on the northern districts of Marseilles (CIBC, 1996), is often linked with the task of performance evaluation and sanction.

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The Luxembourg report (Fandel and Pauwels, 1994) also clearly argues that this is a negative connotation of the services concerned, which treat this period in the lives of young people as a priority – or even perhaps as the only period – with less concern for the periods that follow. In Luxembourg the ninth year of school education seems to be the most crucial in terms of the pupil's future, and most of the counselling services are concentrated in this one year.

It is time to think about providing help and advice before this critical year, as well as after. This is a special recommendation in urgent need of consideration. From all the reports it is clearly apparent that employment and training should no longer be viewed as separate from other aspects of life but as an integral part of it. For instance, it is important to think in terms of life as a whole; although it is vital to start providing advice and guidance before the transition between school and employment, it is just as vital to continue after a person enters the labour market.

Besides thinking in terms of life as a whole, which brings us to the concept of lifelong training, we must consider the idea that advice and vocational guidance make sense only if the individual's broader needs are taken into account and strategies developed, taking the holistic approach to each person's problems. The difficult case of the homeless and other marginalised people who need reintegration is the most obvious example, but another is the target group of apparently problem-free individuals who find it hard to invest in themselves or to develop in their personal and working lives because their work is not what they hoped it would be or what they feel they are capable of.

The appropriate step, therefore, is one that on the whole has already been taken: not to confine the work of counselling to the period of transition from education to employment, but to extend the scope of support and advisory services and to consider every occasion when an adult is faced with transition options.

Transitions may be of at least two kinds: from unemployment to employment and from one job to another (following retraining for a different job, or training that might lead to advancement, etc.). With adults, the transition may also entail paving the way from a paid job to an unpaid job-related activity (see the question of voluntary work for early retirees, for example).

The problems that an individual has to face may sometimes be greater than might originally be assumed. The case study on the VUS project in Denmark and the two weeks' general education course offered to workers have revealed that many of them,

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despite being established in society and the working world, were in fact incapable of filling in even simple forms because of reading difficulties. It is obvious that, given the rapid pace of technological change, such people run the risk of finding themselves in difficulties with which they would be hard put to it to cope unless they receive additional training.

Taking a more global approach, it may first be necessary to disperse the places where advice is provided (see 3.1.4.). The services responsible for giving advice should be set up in several very different locations depending on the size of a town, its main economic activity and its particular social policy. Besides the national employment centres to which any individual can go, social support offices, town halls, works councils, sometimes the unions, or neighbourhood committees or bodies, may provide some of the services to which there is a collective or individual entitlement.

These transitions and the help to be given by the counselling services must be seen against the background of an individual's personal characteristics, the place where he lives and his deep-seated motivations. A service offering occasional support would then far more obviously become one that concerns itself with individuals, helping them to establish a life plan, taking into account all the dimensions and parameters of their personal, social and working lives.

For instance, this model of operation in what we have called the global perspective must contribute to making such counselling services the core element in the lifelong support of an individual, the aim being to analyse his situation and determine the different routes that will lead him – or bring him back – to a social role or paid or job-related activity, combining in a single structure and a single service the personal, economic, social, cultural and education and training aspects.

3.1.4. Towards prevention

Counselling should be more widespread and an integral part of everyday life. It should be provided before the event and also contribute before unemployment or exclusion becomes established.

Helping an individual to regain confidence, become independent and construct life plans calls for active organisation on the part of the counselling services. This is a question raised both in the two CEDEFOP synthesis reports *(the need for vocational counselling among different target groups of young people under 28 years of age in the European Community*, Chisholm, 1994; *Social Occupational Integration at Local Level*, Stathopoulos, 1997) and in the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions Eurocounsel report – (*Portfolio of case studies – Examples of innovatory vocational counselling practices*, Hurley, 1994; *The role of guidance and counselling for adults on a changing labour market*, Watt, 1997). The arrangements must be made in favour of both the users and the services themselves. It must be made possible for a greater proportion of the population to be active, to engage in a significant form of activity, whatever that might be. The means of preserving what one has achieved must also be provided.

This activation should as an optimum, for instance, be able to avert the risks of unemployment and exclusion and come into play before the problems have become too firmly established. This recommendation, whose aim is to promote preventive counselling, would entail the setting up of various measures along several different lines.

A preliminary observation should be made: seen with the eyes of the youngest people, guidance on completion of schooling is not enough. Young people must have far more substantial channels of consultation. Without going into details here of the shortage of resources and shortcomings in the training of advice practitioners (see 3.2.4.), from a review of the situations in various European Union countries it seems that the advice offered is not always effective or even adequate.

The Irish report cited by Chisholm (1994) states that 'vocational guidance is rare and dispersed [...] many young people have not received guidance before leaving school'.

In Portugal, the guidance and psychological counselling services are used by two thirds of pupils, but only during the final year of compulsory schooling. These services have been operating since 1983 but do not yet exist in all schools. Furthermore, they are available only on request.

In countries such as Denmark where personal, school and vocational guidance is practically a school subject, two fifths of young people in the 15 to 24 year old age group do not feel that they have received such guidance.

The recommendation to be put forward, then, is that the concept and practice of advice centres be thought through afresh. Pro-active and preventive organisation means coming within the reach of actual or po-

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tential users and being positioned well before – and well after - the periods of transition.

One of the first points noted, even though at first sight it seems to have little impact on the quality of service provided, relates to the premises of support and advice services. CEDEFOP's consolidated report on *the need for vocational counselling among different target groups of young people under 28 years of age in the European Community* (Chisholm, 1994), as well as the report by the European Foundation (*The role of guidance and counselling for adults on a labour market in transition,* Eurocounsel Final Report, Watt, 1997), consider that it would be appropriate for them to be 'attractive'. An official environment is a deterrent, and what is needed is a friendly area where advice can be offered in a pleasant setting.

On the question of premises, another need would be to increase their number and locations. It may at first sight seem a little trivial to be concerned with premises and how they are fitted out and decorated when the issue is to combat unemployment and exclusion, but in practice this concern is not a neutral factor or one without effects. Spatial expansion also means developing a strategy in order to reach as many individuals and groups as possible and involve them in occupational support, counselling and guidance services more actively and also in a less official manner. There must be a voluntary strategy of integrating guidance services into the community and daily life.

Among the guidance, apprenticeship and training 'shops' created in the United Kingdom and financed by the TECs (local Training and Enterprise Councils in England and Wales) and LECs (local units for technical training, Scotland) (Howieson et al., 1994), the experience of STEPAhead (Hurley, 1994), virtually a shop in the town centre, with the same opening hours as the shops around it, is an interesting example. Also of note in Erfurt in Germany (Hurley, 1994) is an original neighbourhood service: the traditional meeting place is used, in this case the local café. Without making them too ordinary, the aim is for such services not to be compartmentalised with, and so inevitably seen as being like, separate institutions such as school for youngsters and job centres for adults.

In the framework of a dynamic and preventive organisation, in order to make the people who may staff such structures less formal and less managerial, the services provided should be 'accessorised': making guides available for consultation by everyone (see the guide published by the advice centre in Sarrebruck

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in Germany for example), as well as yearbooks, posters, etc. It is valuable to make use of today's media advances, even at times the opportunities provided by the Internet, for example. It should be noted, however, that this use of relatively sophisticated resources has its drawbacks: whatever the financial support the structures may enjoy, it is unlikely that they will all be equally well equipped with hardware and software. There is a risk of somewhat widening the gap between regions, towns, neighbourhoods and services that are better or less well endowed, and therefore between individuals who may or may not be able to use services of varying standards of performance.

Besides the particular premises and resources to be provided locally, the recommendation of having an active and preventive organisation, as part of more practical involvement of such services in everyday life, may also imply – may above all imply – reaching out to individuals and groups.

'Reaching out' is a portmanteau concept. It implies a measure of dynamism, of spatial mobility, leading perhaps to going out to those people who do not normally make use of counselling services. It may mean flexibility in the timing of help, i.e. anticipating events and conducting preventive action to help those at risk of unemployment or of encountering particular problems which might be dealt with the help of counselling and guidance services.

Ungdomsvejledningen in Denmark (Box 10) is an interesting example of an 'pro-active' and 'preventive' organisation of the provision of advice.

Box 10

Towards 'dynamic' advice and canvassing - the approach adopted by Ungdomsvejledningen

Ungdomsvejledningen is a decentralised advice programme based in Holbæk and funded by the local authorities. It caters specifically for young people up to the age of 19 and/or during the two-year period after they leave school.

These are contacted at least twice a year, even if they have moved away from the area.

As an advice programme, Ungdomsvejledningen makes a considerable effort to ensure that the service it provides reaches the whole of the target population.

The young people, especially those at more direct risk of unemployment, are contacted personally by letter or telephone. Ungdomsvejledningen has meeting places in the town centre that are easy to reach, but it also visits young people in their own homes.

A vocational education programme is also provided in schools, offering comprehensive information on the options for further education, training and employment. If despite this a young person fails to find work, he is immediately placed on an intensive introductory and advice programme (intro-&vejledningskursus).

Source: Hurley, 1994.

In the same way, social workers at the advice service in the administrative district of Saarlouis in Germany (Hurley, 1994) visit jobless people in their homes if they fail to respond to an invitation to come into the service. It obtains the addresses and particulars of the unemployed through the social security agency or the job centre. The social worker reaching out to the unemployed person seeks to obtain as much information as possible on the school he has attended, what work training or experience he may have acquired, etc. The questionnaire compiled as a result is used in providing advice by 'matching up projects', so that a choice can be make of the type of programme to which an individual may be guided. A long-term integration plan is then produced, covering different types of programmes that will enable the individual to set his own goals from what is now a precise starting point.

An active and preventive organisation also implies that the support, counselling and guidance services see themselves as part of an evolving process. It also means that contacts must be made and pursued with other local partners. There is a good deal of work to be done in establishing, promoting and strengthening networks in order to provide a fuller range of services to users (see 3.2.2.).

These various points highlight how great a contribution occupational support, counselling and guidance services can make to individuals and groups in their approach. They also show how necessary it still is to develop certain practices, improve certain services and develop certain types of service. It should be a matter of priority to provide support at grass roots, but a clear statement should be made at European level on the directions to be taken, and fresh thought should be given to the theories, practices and goals underlying the operation of such services.

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3.2. Reviewing the concept and organisation of services at European, national and local level

Although the target groups and the services offered vary greatly from one country to another and even from one region or town to another, outline directives should be laid down, which can then be adapted in each place to the particular context.

In practice the preferred option should be the local approach, gearing actions to the specific needs of an individual, district or group and so that the role of the operators in a specific area can be defined. At the same time, however, it is vital to look at the subject from the global perspective in order to state the main priorities for policies on combating unemployment and the ensuing risks of exclusion.

In all the countries that make up Europe, central government must take the lead in formulating these social policies, with the regional and municipal authorities and local operators being those that directly administer the policies. Central Government will continue to define the rules of the game and retain overall responsibility as the guarantor of national solidarity.

In general, there must be a new concept of counselling practices. Economic changes imply not only the improvement of existing principles and practices, but also a global rethinking of the place to be occupied by these various services today, the methods they should be developing, the aims and goals to be achieved. Important principles need to be confirmed or redefined. It is of value if this can first be set up at a global level - European and national – and that a clear-cut, concise theory be stated, which could be taken as a starting point for practices, which may be adapted at the regional and local levels.

In these major trends, there should in particular be a review of the position and the relations of the occupational support, counselling and guidance services with the major institutions (school, etc.), the local social partners, businesses and the various non-governmental bodies, for example (see 3.2.2.).

Lastly, while the practices of counselling and guidance services should be modified, the quality of what they offer improved and their fields of competence broadened, it is also inevitable that serious consideration be given to the training of advice practitioners and other social workers operating in such services (3.2.4.).

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3.2.1. A specific policy at the European and national levels

A declaration of principle setting out the priorities and the main courses of action at European and national levels needs to be established, with minimum standards of guarantee in order to harmonise the practice of counselling within the European Union.

It has been explicitly established that vocational advice and guidance can make active employment measures more effective, and that they are major factors in the struggle against unemployment and economic and social exclusion.

Future trends on the labour market indicating greater flexibility and demand for an ever higher level of skills confirm the need to provide for counselling services throughout life, so that people can cope better with the transition between school and employment and with periods of unemployment.

To avoid unemployment, thought should be given to new forms of career guidance during working life. Just as there should be lifelong learning, counselling services throughout life are also needed to help people deal with the complexities of the working world and training.

The political decision-makers must have the requisite tools to encourage the setting up of better quality services and their adaptation to the needs and demand of individuals.

The White Paper on 'Growth, competitiveness, employment' (1993) already contains detailed proposals designed to make a further impact on the labour market, including objectives of basic competences, plans for guaranteed employment for young people, better information for employees, etc. The paper has been reinforced by other programmes (see the Maastricht Treaty social chapter). In the context of a more closely integrated Europe and single market, not only the jobs markets but also occupational profiles and activities must be defined at a more global level.

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions' Eurocounsel consolidated report (Watt, 1997) stresses the vital need for a declaration of principle at European level setting out these various prospects and establishing the advisory service as an independent measure, a fundamental component of other measures and a promoter of social cohesion, facilitating reintegration on the labour market and in society and creating the link between economic development and social development.

There are good arguments for this view of advice as a measure independent of other measures. Recognition of its independent status should encourage such services to develop in the direction of providing global guidance for their clients (in other words, extending beyond the close, confined framework of jobseeking and/or training). In addition, by treating advice as separate from other measures, it should be easier to measure its effects and evaluate its effectiveness more accurately.

According to the Eurocounsel report (Watt, 1997), it is important that evaluation and coordination of advice and guidance policies be under the responsibility of experienced external agencies. The social partners, European employers' associations and the trade unions should also be involved.

Another vital objective that should be included in a European-level declaration of principle is a stipulation of the minimum guarantees that will ensure that everyone has access to the services, and what is more to effective services.

This declaration of principle, setting out the minimum standards, must also be established at national level. Each region should then be in a position to prepare a strategic plan for the provision of advice, which should be part of the overall national strategic framework besides being developed at local level, in liaison with the various economic and social partners (this already exists, for example, in the United Kingdom in the form of 'Investors in People' – standards of quality for the development of human resources within the workplace (Howieson et al., 1994)).

Lastly, at the national, regional and local levels there is a need to conduct regular reviews. This means listing the existing services – public and private, whether in the form of partnerships or non-governmental organisations, profit-making or non-profit making – and determining how they operate and their strengths and weaknesses, so that the advice market in the territory concerned can be understood a little better and the measurement and evaluation procedures improved (see annex).

This also means compiling information on the local market, the options, opportunities and advantages, etc. The work would have to be both statistical and qualitative from this viewpoint, encouraging the support, counselling and guidance services to rely more closely on their local partners.

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3.2.2. The multidisciplinary and holistic approach

Not only must advice be provided to individuals, but the range of services should also be extended and clients should be directed towards other networks, where appropriate.

Obviously a structure that aims to offer global guidance to individuals must establish a number of links with widely different agencies, associations, committees and private persons. This is true even when the transition is between education and employment or between unemployment and work, but it is also true, on a broader scale, when the issue is the lifelong counselling of the individual on problems as varied as those relating to his working status as well as his social and personal status.

Such links have already been established at European level between several sectors; they need to be improved and intensified at national and local levels with the economic, social and educational sectors, among others.

The main objective of such links is to broaden the range of opportunities and information that can be conveyed, increasing the likelihood of users making better progress from one service to another and achieving a positive result.

The creation of links and the resulting multidisciplinarity must first be established in the schools, creating preventive action and providing young people with an adequate body of knowledge for them to make an informed choice of what is on offer. It may be necessary for the occupational support, counselling and guidance services to be in contact with a youngster's personal networks (parents, teachers). It is even more vital that these services should have established links, with local businesses, for example, so that a young person can become familiar with the working world and acquire his first experience of work, which will help him make a start and make a better choice of the route in which he is interested.

It is on the local labour market and in workplaces close at hand that support, counselling and guidance services must here and now create the basis for close contact, so that they can create links between those offering their labour and those needing that labour – the origin of their role. Many users have reported a glaring lack of information on this local labour market among advisory services. A partnership between local enterprises and counselling and guidance services would help to create or improve certain measures, for example by offering work placement oppor-

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tunities, considering applications from the long-term unemployed or organising open days to familiarise people with a company and the work it does.

In the framework of preventive measures and the enlargement of the occupational support, counselling and guidance services, it is also valuable for links to be established with the trade unions. The latter could take a greater part in the provision of advice, for example strengthening contacts with the advice practitioners on users' rights, new training opportunities and ways of preventing unemployment.

An interesting scheme has been conducted in Denmark, at Fakse (Box 5), where local unions have taken deliberate steps to add to the advisory responsibilities of delegates from local workshops, who then serve as catalysts in encouraging their colleagues to take a training course.

This partnership strategy is most advanced in Denmark. A single approach involves advisers, employers, unions and local economic development planners, government and non-governmental agencies. The partnership ranges from the simple transfer of information from one body to another to a more advanced strategy of coordination or cross-linking, sharing not only information but particular skills and creating an integrated, multidisciplinary service.

The small agencies are usually more wary of this process, fearing a loss of independence and of coming under the financial control of the larger structures with which they would have to ally themselves, as recounted in CEDEFOP's consolidated report on *Social and Occupational Integration at Local Level* (Stathopoulos, 1997). Nevertheless, to an increasing degree the services are recognising the positive impact of this type of strategy, for example by putting the educational system in contact with other institutions in the same town. A measure of confidence must first be established to promote this synergy of the actions to be developed.

Clearly at local level – at least – the support, counselling and guidance services must be able to inform individuals about the particular bodies, associations or structures that can be of some help or value to them.

In this respect, it is not enough to create networks with the official institutions; it is also necessary to examine the usefulness and contribution of informal structures, non-governmental organisations or neighbourhood councils, for example.

This is in fact what has already been done at local level in Belgium and in Greece (Elefsina and Thessaloniki), as described in the CEDEFOP consolidated report (*Social and Occupational Integration at Local Level*, Stathopoulos, 1997), which mentions effective and efficient coordination mechanisms.

While the advice to be given primarily concerns the individual or groups in difficulties, it may also be directed to employers or other local bodies. A case study in Austria on Arbeitsassistenz, assistance with work, as part of the Pro Mente Infirmis (PMI) work group, furnishes an example (Box 11).

Box 11

The activities and services offered at Arbeitsassistenz

Arbeitsassistenz is a centre established by Pro Mente Infirmis, an association for mental and social health. Its main activity is the reintegration into society of people suffering from psychological problems. In addition to psycho-social advice centres and residential communities for the mentally ill, it administers a vocational training centre.

Arbeitsassistenz is jointly financed by the labour market authority, the provincial bureau for the disabled and the regional authorities.

Special links promote access to the services. The liaison is essentially through the jobs centre rehabilitation services or the provincial bureau for the disabled. As a result of the good cooperation with these departments, users hear about the existence of Arbeitsassistenz and are sent to the centre for help and advice. Certain other users are sent to Arbeitsassistenz by other branches of Pro Mente Infirmis, or they may discover the centre through acquaintances or friends. The centre makes considerable efforts in public relations; its services are targeted both to its users (with individual counselling sessions, etc.) and to employers (educational campaigns, formulating objectives, etc.). Arbeitsassistenz aims to become a direct partner in the user/employer/social environment triangle, attempting to offer professional help and arrive at solutions that benefit all the parties concerned.

There are several challenges, therefore. The object is to provide help simultaneously to:

- employees with psychological/social problems who risk losing their jobs;

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- unemployed people with psychological/social problems who are trying to return to the labur market;
- employers, management and works committees that have to deal with these people's mental problems and the problems to which they give rise in the workplace.

Thus, here the twofold aim is to improve the chances of access to jobs for its clients by establishing contacts with companies and to arouse awareness among employers, company principals, management and personnel managers, with a view to more open-minded attitudes and closer integration – with due regard to the interests of the employer, the client and the social and working environment.

Source: Hurley, 1994.

It is recognised that through creating links at several levels, more sophisticated or at least better organised access can be obtained to information and better quality and more extensive services. All the parties involved in the support, advice and guidance, i.e. the individual as well as the employer and society in general, are taken into consideration.

Lastly, apart from creating links and collaboration with local partners, it is obvious that occupational support, counselling and guidance services cannot do without structured support from and contact with the official agencies: the social support bodies, national employment centres, etc.

Ungdomsvejledningen in Denmark, as we have seen (Box 10), is able to promote an active system of organisation that looks beyond individual needs because it is supported and informed by the official bodies helping groups at risk towards whom the work could be directed. For instance, in the framework of Ungdomsvejledningen, there is a system of transfer by the young people's training and education establishments in the vicinity, which give them information on the identity of young people who drop out of education or training courses. Through this source Ungdomsvejledningen can then make contact with the youngsters in an effort to remotivate them and persuade them to return to training. In the same way, Ungdomsvejledningen is in contact with the social security services, which withhold benefits if a person refuses to take part in a course. Parents, officials and the local authorities are also extensively involved, attending meetings to coordinate the advisory activities and to influence local policies, in particular by special orientation courses.

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The Trinijove foundation in Spain (Hurley, 1994), a non-government association established in a disadvantaged district in Barcelona, also makes use of all the available resources. These come from various bodies and authorities such as INEM, the regional government, local communities, etc., with which co-operation agreements have been signed. Contacts have also been made with the Basque Country and in France.

The CILOs – local employment initiative centres – in Piedmont in Italy, are another example of the creation of links among several sectors and partners helping to improve the quality and volume of services provided. Such links are, moreover, the basis of the policy of CILOs. As Hurley (1994) reports, they act as coordinators of all the resources that may be brought to bear for the unemployed in the region. The labour market observatory is the link between the CILOs and the region. It organises the network, distributes training, continually seeks to improve the system, helps the CILOs and launches research and enquiries for the network as a whole.

The lesson to be learned is that, to combat unemployment and help people at risk of becoming unemployed, one must seek the collaboration of all the resources existing locally, especially those with responsibilities other than those of the occupational support, counselling and guidance services. A number of organisations can intervene effectively on various grounds, and this may give rise to joint planning by the various bodies.

In addition to the necessary contacts with education and employment bodies, institutions such as the police or clergy can also have a positive impact in counteracting unemployment and exclusion, as described for example by the Swedish Kalmar report (CEDEFOP, 1997, quoted by Stathopoulos, 1997).

Similarly, it is important for there to be liaison between the educational sector and the working world, local partners, associations and neighbourhood councils among others. Links and cooperation are inevitable between those working in the field of social protection and those working in the field of job-related advice with a view to economic and social development.

3.2.3. Linking passive and active measures

Here the recommendations are very practical. On the one hand, people should not have to forfeit their benefits when they move from a passive to an active measure or when they set up their own businesses. There must, therefore, be close contact among the bodies responsible for these two dimensions, social and economic.

On the other hand, active measures should be directed more systematically towards the institutions or authorities in charge of local economic development. Some solutions could, for instance, be based on the promotion of SMEs, the creation of new jobs or services and the development of self-employment.

There seems to be a fairly clear-cut distinction between the role, present and future, of the occupational support, counselling and guidance services, and other measures to combat unemployment and exclusion. The argument put forward by support and advice services is that their essential task is, in the framework of their work to improve everybody's quality of life, to propose active measures to direct people towards employment or a job-related activity. As outlined in previous chapters, the task is to restore a person's self-confidence, integrate him into society, and help him to enter (or return to) the labour market or sharpen his skills and expertise with a view to bettering himself.

Encouraging a person to regain his confidence, helping him to acquire new qualifications, must not penalise him financially, even for a temporary period.

Although it is not always the domain of occupational support, counselling and guidance services to arrange a job when someone has completed a specific training course, they must make sure that the person has the means of subsistence he requires to make progress. This is far more often classified amongst what have been termed as passive measures. It is essential, however, even when an active measure has been initiated, so that it can be continued and come to the best possible conclusion.

For instance, if there is one link that must be firmly established and structured, it is to work in close co-operation with social protection and unemployment benefit departments, etc.

Various examples have shown that, quite apart from the wish to take training or enter the labour market, the financial element – however small – is still reassuring in certain cases, is the primary consideration in others and may counteract the resolve to better one's situation in the longer term.

One of the cases reported is the case of disabled people in Seville in particular (Hurley, 1994). The Asociación para the promoción del Minusválido (PROMI) is an association whose objective is to try to integrate the (mentally) handicapped in society and

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work. These are grouped according to ability and receive special education and vocational training so that some of them can enter the local labour market on a virtually 'normal' footing. Apart from the families, which often oppose their disabled member starting to work, regarding them as incapable of doing anything, or preferring to keep girls at home to help with some of the domestic chores, the case history mentions a regulation which often hampers any attempt to provide training:

> 'as disabled people incapable of working, they receive a State pension (25 000 to 32 000 pesetas [in 1994] a month, 14 times a year). If they become capable of working, they lose their right to this pension without being sure of finding a job.' (Hurley, 1994, p. 129).

It is evident, then, that there may still be some inertia in this field, even though a proportion of the disabled could undoubtedly do a 'normal' job and thereby lead a 'normal' life without necessarily having to be supported.

A change in mentality, practices and policies undoubtedly needs to be introduced to overcome this practical situation, which penalises not only the person concerned but also the people around him and society in general. Steps have already been taken at various levels.

For instance, in the system of self-counselling and activation for the jobless in Denmark (Hurley, 1994), people continue to receive their normal unemployment benefits while participating in the activities of Initiativgruppen (Maribo).

In the same way, as already described (Box 5), the beneficiaries of VUS and VUC who take study leave to attend a training course receive a weekly subsidy from the government. In this job rotation scheme, the unemployed people replacing them receive the same wages as were paid to the workers now in training.

In the framework of socially useful jobs, the example of Trento (Italy) also shows that good coordination has been established between the counselling services and the retirement services. Older unemployed people - those nearing retirement age - are recruited by cooperatives until they have worked the requisite number of years to entitle them to retirement benefits.

The Irish programme of socially useful employment allows an unemployed person who accepts a part-time job or a temporary contract to continue drawing his allowances.

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Lastly, on the question of retraining and aid for setting up in business, always somewhat hazardous, the programme of benefits for returning to work enables the unemployed to accept a paid job or to become self-employed, but retain 75% of their social benefits for the first year and 50% for the second. They also keep all the secondary benefits. (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions – Watt, 1997, p.71).

As mentioned by this Irish report, the programme, in common with others that have been developed along the same lines, enables the long-term unemployed to try out different job opportunities while retaining at least a minimal degree of financial security.

Other measures to help the unemployed set up their own businesses have been introduced in several European Union countries. They follow the same reasoning of solving the problem of unemployment through individual initiative.

Just as advice or guidance offered on very restrictive conditions (the recipient must be over 18, have been unemployed for less than a year, etc.) penalises the individual and detracts from the image of the services themselves and the value that should be placed on lifelong education or training, such schemes and forms of cooperation between passive and active employment and integration measures are of great importance in the development and legitimacy of occupational support, counselling and guidance services. Advice practitioners are those most likely to encourage this enhanced value and more extensive use of occupational support, counselling and guidance services.

3.2.4. The question of the training of practitioners and the (re)definition of their duties

Advisers themselves must have nationally certified training. This should be followed up by continuing training so that they can specialise in the advice they give. For example, sound expertise in the local economy is a prerequisite for giving advice on setting up a business.

As described throughout this study, the responsibilities and practices of support, counselling and guidance services are considerable and varied. The growing trend is not to focus solely on the question of transition (primarily from education to employment) but to extend the help to cover every period and aspect of life. To provide such services, obviously it is a basic requirement that advice practitioners be able to respond to such new needs and changes.

If they are to be able to legitimise the work they do and the advice they give, and actually provide a specialist service, it is important that advice practitioners, in particular salaried practitioners, be suitably trained. It should be inconceivable that someone would be trained unless he or she has the basic skills to provide this type of service. This is mentioned, however, in CEDEFOP's consolidated report dealing with the practice of vocational guidance for young people in Greece at the time of moving from the first to the second cycle (see: *Young people's needs for vocational guidance: the young population in general, young people who leave school without completing their compulsory education, young women with no skills training*, Zanni-Teliopoulou, Stathakopoulou, 1995; *the need for vocational counselling among different target groups of young people under 28 years of age in the European Community*, Chisholm, 1994).

At present there is a certain diversity among the professional profiles of advice practitioners: some of them have been trained in the field of vocational guidance, others have a general education diploma, while others have psychological/social training. The type of training leads to different advice practices, in which the emphasis may be on certain aspects rather than others. There is an interaction between the type of training taken and the functions that practitioners identify as priorities or as coming more strictly within their field of competence.

There is, moreover, a degree of vagueness in the definitions practitioners give of their profession, responsibilities and tasks. In the United Kingdom national report (Howieson *et al.*, 1994), some advice practitioners see their main responsibility as having enough general knowledge to transfer the client to the appropriate advice agencies. It is to be hoped that they will have established the links and created enough networks to do this work, but in the framework of a comprehensive vocational support, advice and guidance service there is no certainty that this practice is adequate.

Many people are aware of the growing flexibility of the labour market and the need to be familiar with that market to provide the best possible help to the client coming to the service. Few people, however, know enough about the job opportunities and possible openings. Some people see themselves as interfaces between those in need of advice and the various local operators, or even as catalysts or more simply mediators between the unemployed and employers. They often find it hard to provide information to those who wish to become self-employed. They see

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themselves not as business development officers, but rather as educators.

Various programmes or initiatives have already been launched to train advice practitioners. The shopfloor representatives trained at Fakse in Denmark are shown how to give full information and advice on their workplace, familiarise them with different subjects: counselling skills, including the ability to listen closely, word processing, understanding budgets, project-centered group work methods (Hurley, 1994, p. 54). They are then asked to draw up a plan with a view to applying their knowledge to a programme for the rotation of employment and training.

In the Self-Development Counselling Group in Ireland (Hurley, 1994), counsellors are trained to acquire a grasp of the economic and social processes leading to unemployment, become aware of their own resources and abilities and thus help other unemployed people (it will be recalled that this system is based on self-counselling and therefore it is generally the unemployed themselves who provide the service).

Bearing in mind the various points discussed and the variety of functions a social worker has to perform within a vocational support, advice and guidance service, several factors need to be taken into account when (re)defining the functions of such practitioners and the skills and training they must acquire or develop.

Looking at the question of personalised help, it is essential that they should have the time to listen to their clients. One of the first considerations might be to ensure that the number of social workers assigned to the task is adequate to ensure that the necessary attention is given. As things now stand, this is not very likely. Many departments are under-funded and operate essentially by recourse to the voluntary sector. Although such voluntary effort is needed for the process to be properly conducted, because it arises from a desire to help without any particular self-interest, it is also necessary for specialists trained in counselling work and appointed to this task to participate, manage and supervise the services provided (as is the case with the CILOs in Italy). It is indeed indispensable bearing in mind the requirements laid down by the OECD, which mentioned one hour's counselling per month for every unemployed person. These practitioners must also be trained in the task and know how to 'listen' to every person coming to them.

In the practice of counselling in which the individual is viewed in the global perspective – covering not

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just his personality but also the route he is taking and his environment – when drawing up personalised plans of action, it is essential to train counsellors in methods of qualitative research that depart somewhat from the conventional psychological tests. Guidance activities, as they are defined today, can no longer be restricted to this method, whose results doubtful in some cases, and in all cases very pinpointed and restrictive – do not give a picture of a person in his social context and in a very broad perspective.

Taking the question of the active organisation of services, advice practitioners must also have the resources needed for this task. It may be of interest to develop new technology that can help them in their search. Furthermore, above all they must be able to keep abreast of developments on the labour market, they must have contacts with the various local operators and the experts in local economic development and community development so that they can provide the optimum information on the new opportunities in employment and other activities.

There is undoubtedly a need to create a 'profession' of advice practitioners. They will require their own training and official national recognition. The report on the case study of the Guidance Network in Bradford in the United Kingdom looked forward to the creation of a 'standard guidance diploma' (Hurley, 1994).

Two types of guidance practitioner should be entailed in this professionalisation, one as useful as the other:

> The 'generalist' with the ability to access information (on the labour market, job-related programmes, opportunities for special study and training) and set up networks, and who has listening and evaluation skills, a knowledge of policies, etc. is held in growing regard. Some of the reports also note that the generalist must also have 'a certain experience of life'.
>
> Besides these generalist competences, there is also a need for specialist counsellors. In this case, arrangements must be made for further professional training. The Eurocounsel consolidated report produced by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Watt, 1997) envisages the creation of a new profession: the 'counsellor specialising in the wider labour market'.

Nevertheless, whatever the title given to either of these practitioners, it is important that multidisciplinary teams can be set up within occupational support, counselling and guidance services – with generalists and people who specialise in one sector or another.

Apart from initial training, it is vital that they receive continuing training and short courses so they can keep constantly up to date and informed (especially about the launching of new policies and fresh opportunities) and extend their expertise.

No doubt properly trained personnel, kept constantly informed about developments on the labour market, the introduction of new policies, individuals' demand and the needs – and these too change – are in themselves a guarantee of a quality service. In addition there is the concept of proximity, which adds to the effectiveness of the advice provided.

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Conclusion

Many publications, taking various forms, have been used in this synthesis report. It gives a picture of the whole difficulty of grasping the concepts of social integration and entering the working world, from the viewpoint of the provision of advice, help and guidance to people confronted with a range of problems. The group of operators taking part in this process have differing agendas and strategies. There are several markets side by side. The labour market, of course, but also the supply of and demand for counselling, as well as the training market, which often follows on after counselling and guidance. Even so, this report offers a neutral analysis and at the same time a synthesis of the main findings and recommendations put forward by all the authors quoted.

There are several factors that might advance thinking in these fields.

The individuals to be advised, guided and supported consist of varied groups which evolve in different contexts. Three main target groups have, however, been identified in this publication: the marginalised, people becoming marginalised and people who are 'apparently problem-free'. The definition of these three main groups should not conceal the diversity of the transition situations that individuals have to face. These main groups should be considered on the lines of Russian dolls in an attempt to arrive at as precise a definition as possible of the problems experienced by each person, taking very many variables into account. The level of training, the duration of periods of unemployment, the geographic, social and cultural environment, are key criteria that should be borne in mind in attempting to provide more effective help and reach the solution best adapted to that person's particular situation.

The initial objectives and the goals of job-centred counselling and guidance services are coming up against a series of new problems due to more or less recent economic and social changes:

- the jobs market is saturated, which means that the goal of combating unemployment through occupational integration and reintegration cannot be achieved. The solution, then, is to set up replacement measures and reorient the advice and guidance mission, even though this might create an impression that the service has lost its way;
- improving the level of skills often runs in parallel with entering the working world. But entering or returning to the working world is not always the prime objective in that, when faced with certain groups who have already gone far down the path to exclusion, the social mission is more immediately useful;

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while many services are within the public-sector framework, others are private and some provided for a fee. This runs contrary to the prime mission of providing aid and promoting equal opportunities whereby these services, through the help they provide, narrow the gap between the recipients of guidance and those to whom access is denied;

the 'best' services on offer tend to go first of all to the most qualified. The targeting of public policies towards certain categories of the population thus often increases the marginalisation of certain groups who are not in the targeted area;

the proliferation and inconsistency of the services offered to the population often means that the help provided is disparate, complicated and not easy for the user to understand.

Certain recommendations set out in this document suggest elements of responses to the problems described. They point to a redefinition of the mission of guidance and advice services and their repositioning both in the routes taken by individuals and within the different service providers. These recommendations may be more or less applicable having regard to the local or national context, but they help to provide a global framework for rethinking the subject.

Employment should no longer necessarily be the focus of the service being provided. For instance, counselling should not always concentrate on immediately finding or returning to employment. Various actions focusing on the individual as a whole person may be undertaken with the objective of achieving active citizenship and formulating life plans.

Every transition in life may be the subject of counselling. Transition should be seen as a move between two different situations (the first job, a return to work, promotion, retirement, etc.). The move is not always easy and may call for intervention from support workers.

The preference should be for a holistic view of the individual (looking at his ethnic and social origins, his motivations and aspirations, his way of life, his economic, social, cultural and structural environment) and the aim of the service being promoted.

Occupational integration and reintegration and more broadly every form of transition should mobilise the individual's personal resources (self-esteem, determination), the networks of relationships, either existing or to be created, and an audit of competences, with due regard to the person's actual potential and his aspirations.

The end objective, in the case of occupational integration or reintegration, may be broken down into stages: voluntary work, training, a temporary (and not necessarily paid) job, etc. to help a person to find, or restore, a working pace and attitudes, self-confidence, an awareness of his skills and his personal and career aspirations.

It is therefore essential to phase active measures (which include vocational advice and guidance) and financial aid (a passive measure), so that there can be a review of all the aspects that will help with entering or returning to the world of work on a durable basis in the medium or long term.

For the global, personalised approach recommended, the services directly associated with vocational advice and guidance will not be enough on their own. Other services (psychological help, social assistance, etc.) can offer specific forms of intervention which should be combined with them.

If the ultimate aim is employment, even in the form of temporary and/or unpaid work, networks need to be created with partners in the labour market (employers, trade unions, etc.), in order to liaise between the supply of labour and the demand.

These two latter aspects, the links between the service providers and the jobs market, can take practical form only in a local context where closer relations among the various parties is facilitated by physical closeness.

An approach at local level puts things on a more personal level and above all makes a preventive approach more effective, since it is easier to identify individuals and groups of individuals. It will facilitate the identification of their special needs and place them in a more clearly defined context.

The local approach also helps to achieve greater consistency among the various services offered and makes the provision more transparent to the potential user, and access to information easier.

Thus, the reader must above all bear in mind the vital need to think through and administer counselling, aid and guidance – on both social and vocational integration – at as local a level as possible. It is also likely that counselling services would become more lastingly effective if they were to take a more systematic and global an approach and thus anticipate the problems.

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Annex

Methods of evaluating counselling services

Whatever the approach adopted, the techniques implemented and the help provided by the various services, it is evidently difficult to evaluate their impact impartially in that they are not necessarily the only factors affecting the route a person takes. Nevertheless, while the intrinsic value of such measures cannot be gauged, evaluation at least gives a rather more precise picture of the quantity of services already provided and to be provided, as well as of the quality and appropriateness of the services and any shortcomings.

To find out what has already been achieved and what needs to be created or improved as well as the positive and negative aspects of counselling systems, evaluation is essential. The evaluation must be of the structures themselves, the way they operate, their theoretical basis, their practices and goals. Besides this purely institutional aspect, it must cover the people involved, their role and way of working, their skills, training and capacity to use the tools they need to ensure that the services they provide run smoothly. Lastly it must also – and perhaps this is the prime requirement – look at the users, the potential or future clients, their needs and demands. It is only by knowing what is needed that one can think about what can be provided.

Along these lines is the research conducted by CEDEFOP (Chisholm, 1994) on the vocational guidance needs of young people under 28 in the European Community, and by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, whose Eurocounsel final report (Watt, 1997) proposes a programme of research-action on advice and long-term unemployment.

The CEDEFOP national reports (see Bibliography) are intended to serve as an inventory of the services that already exist and the way they operate, based to a great extent on an understanding of the people for whom the services are intended. The objective of the research and the ensuing evaluation is clearly to point out the changes that need to be made so that the system matches more closely the needs and demands of these young people at times of transition, looking at them from the transnational perspective. The selected target groups also give a clearer idea of the problems and weaknesses of the theory and of the practice of vocational guidance.

The work of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions – through the Eurocounsel programme – has been

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conducted in three phases. The first step was to produce a table of the provision of services at local level, identifying the basic questions arising in each national context and the trends in counselling in each participating country. The next step was to study the developments in Europe and what might be seen as 'good practice'. The last step was to make more specific efforts to bring those services in line with the present and future labour market.

The two types of research are complementary, in that the first is mainly concerned with the users – the potential or future clients – while the second is far more concerned with the operators and the way in which the services operate from a more institutional viewpoint.

Both of them reveal related problems, almost identical concerns and an evolving approach; a serious evaluation and looking at the issue afresh should help to identify the shortcomings explicitly so that they can be remedied.

Remedying the shortcomings – evaluation: quantitative and qualitative

When defining a method of evaluation, several issues need to be taken into account, and above all several goals. The formulation of policies on advice and guidance, as these are commonly defined and practised, cuts across the economic, social and educational sectors. The functions, like the operators, approaches and goals, are different. Evaluation becomes all the more complicated in that there are several goals: the search for quality and the quest for profitability may often be seen in turn as the main aims. Is the purpose of evaluation to obtain additional credits or subsidies for the service in question, on the grounds that if it is better funded the results or the attention paid will be of better quality? Or is it to test the quality of the services provided and the results in terms of individual integration or reintegration, irrespective of the number of people catered for and the particular advantages to the structure (advantages that will be more in terms of effectiveness and prestige)?

These two questions may be reflected in two types of evaluation, one more quantitative in scope, the other more qualitative. The aims of the studies differ, but combined they build up an inventory of the current situation and point to the possibility of improving the services offered now or in the future.

Problems of method

One of the first problems to arise, which was introduced and discussed right from the first chapter, is the method to be adopted in targeting the population groups who need or who will turn to this type of support, counselling and guidance service. We shall not go over the subject again; the reader is referred to chapter 1.

When the question is one of evaluating the services provided, the same type of questions arises: how to categorise the group and the services to be provided, in order to give as precise a picture as possible of their scope. Furthermore, the different European Union countries do not seem to place the emphasis on and promote the same type of evaluation, nor do they seek the same information. The Eurocounsel report published by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Watt, 1997) tells us that:

> 'For example, in Germany, there is currently no clearly defined methodology on the manner of undertaking such evaluations ... The emphasis seems to be more on the social, political and administrative dimensions than on economic measures.
> In other countries, such as the United Kingdom and The Netherlands, for some years now the stress has been on economic evaluation and impact analysis ....
> Other evaluations relate to the effectiveness of services ....
> In other countries, Italy or example, it seems that the stress is more on the evaluation of the process of counselling itself rather than its results...' (p. 92).

Thus, the results sought in each individual country and the recipient of the evaluation (political decision-maker, the local community, etc.), and the nature of the evaluation will differ. Certain evaluations are more in the nature of a cost/benefit analysis, while others pay closer attention to the quality standards to be met. Quantitative evaluations, however, appear to be more frequent.

Various methods have been adopted, depending on the country and the objectives set, without any being entirely satisfactory. Of interest in this respect are the conformity studies, the monitoring and investigation method based on a control group, a brief description of which is given in Boxes 12 to 14. Although all these methods have their advantages, they also have their limitations. They give only a partial view rather than what might be a genuine evaluation of the services concerned, bearing in mind the diversity of the services provided.

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Box 12

Conformity studies

In essence these have been developed in the United Kingdom to measure the results of the provision of (public-sector) vocational guidance.
People are divided into two groups:

- those who have followed the advice they are given, who make up what are considered to be the 'conforming' group;
- those who have not taken the advice, identified as the 'non-conforming' group.

The method of comparison takes as its premise the idea that people in the 'conforming' group should do better in their working lives.

The results are limited, however, in that the study cannot cover all the approaches adopted in the giving of vocational advice. Is the purpose solely to promote success in one's working life? Is this really the only aim? The nature and diversity of the services normally offered give good grounds to doubt this.

Here there is a certain gap between the desired outcome, 'a career' and, for example, self-confidence, the feeling of being useful, etc., which may be developed by means of the help offered by the occupational support, counselling and guidance services, without the person's career prospects necessarily being improved.

Box 13

The control group

This, admittedly, is not an easy method to set up... It consists of dividing the group of unemployed, for example, into two groups:

- one group that has had the benefit of support and advice;
- another group that has deliberately been offered no form of support.

The aim is then to compare the progress of the two groups on their route towards reintegration or a return to work and society.

The first problem with this method is ethical, in that it is tantamount to 'refusing help to someone in need'! Very few practitioners or structures would lend them-

selves to this highly discriminatory game, which penalises a person who does not belong to the 'right' group. It would be unthinkable not to provide help just because this would be useful or even vital to the needs of an investigation, however important.

There is a second limitation to this method: except in the case of official structures and institutions, it is practically impossible to prevent a person from taking advantage of an informal support network – friends or family – who will always in some way or another provide advice or at least its particular views on the person's situation, and will therefore set in motion a particular approach, good or bad, quite separately from any institutional measure.

Box 14

The monitoring method

This method has been tested in Ireland, Denmark and the United Kingdom, to mention only three countries.

The test directly involves the users: it consists of questioning them at regular intervals on their progress, the procedures they have undertaken and those that have been successful and those that have failed, etc.

The test is conducted on the basis of interviews and questionnaires over several periods. It calls upon the memory and understanding of the people being monitored and their reliability in returning the questionnaires.

The method helps to evaluate the development of individuals in response to the aid provided by the occupational support, counselling and guidance services.

Like any other method of this type, the drawback of monitoring is that one has to rely almost solely on the memory of the interviewee. It has the advantage, however, of the person concerned taking an active part in the process of evaluation, and also that account can be taken not only of success in work but of the individual's personal or social betterment.

While it appears to be a more comprehensive assessment of the services provided by the occupational support, counselling and guidance services and the results to which they give rise, this method, like the others, has certain limitations, or at least it does not lead to a real evaluation of the benefits or drawbacks of such practices, for several reasons:

- although advice in fact makes a strong impact on an individual's decisions and the route he will take, one should not entirely overlook the possible influence of an informal network which may be acting at the same time (family, friends, relations, etc.);
- certain effects of counselling may not be visible and easy to identify, but may take longer to become apparent. During this period, other actions may have had an influence and the effects – positive or negative – of the measures employed may not be entirely attributable to the advice given.
- one final point should be taken into account. This relates solely to the personality and prior achievements of a person. It is often the person who already had the best 'chances' of success who in fact is most successful, and he may well have reached that success without any particular outside help, though perhaps a little later.

What emerges from an evaluation depends to a great extent on who commissions it, who conducts it, what one hopes to emphasise and the end objectives pursued in the evaluation (in terms of profitability, for example). Relatively few people conduct a simultaneous quantitative and qualitative analysis; both of them have their advantages and disadvantages.

Evaluation for a cost/benefit analysis

This more strictly quantitative type of evaluation is conducted primarily for the attention of political decision-makers and funding bodies. It consists of determining the economic value of the services provided. With the steady rise of unemployment and long-term unemployment in Europe, and as it has become ever harder for young people to enter the labour market, special measures have been set up. The need to measure the impact of these different policies has become more pressing. Cost/benefit analyses and the results obtained can then be used to present the political arguments in favour of counselling and/or the special measures put into practice.

The prevailing argument here is profitability. Efficient advice and guidance can save the Ministry of Finances or Social Protection or others money, by helping to match the supply and demand in the field of employment more closely.

Given that a multitude of services have been set up in several countries, all offering almost similar services, an evaluation that gives a favourable picture of one particular service will justify its continuation and may lead to the granting of fresh investment and funding.

Annex

The competition that has been created over recent years among the various aid, advice and vocational guidance agencies has, moreover, only accentuated this type of concern. A relatively recent positive evaluation of counselling services will legitimise their work and help them to obtain support, even a degree of prestige and above all more substantial funding. And financial support is vital in accomplishing the tasks assigned, as revealed by the case study on the Fundació Trinijove in Spain (Hurley, 1994) in which the level of users' satisfaction with the services received and their degree of participation in these services are high. The main difficulties encountered by Trinijove, however, are financial. All the agencies with which it [the Foundation] works have cut their budgets and payments are arriving later and later. Given the growth of the association over the last few years and the fact that most of the work is done by voluntary workers, certain organisational problems have been noted (Hurley, 1994, p. 124), which obviously hamper the smooth running of the system and its performance.

It is easier to measure and analyse the quantitative rather than the qualitative aspects of the services offered. Nevertheless, what is clear here is that the evaluation is not arrived at from the users' viewpoint.

It is fairly surprising, therefore, to note on reading the various reports that although the quantitative approach is still the more common, it is also described far less. The various documents consulted clearly prefer to emphasise all the advantages of a qualitative study, despite the problems it creates in its realisation and analysis.

Evaluation for services adapted to the needs

The principal advantage here is that this type of evaluation aims in essence to improve the services themselves in order to achieve a better quality of support for the users. Profitability, the financial question for the benefit of agencies, seem to be left entirely out of account.

Another advantage is that most of these types of evaluation start from grass roots, in other words the users themselves. As described in CEDEFOP's synthesis report (*the need for vocational counselling among different target groups of young people under 28 years of age in the European Community*, Chisholm, 1994), account has not been taken of:

> 'the needs and/or the demands of different target groups of young people based on their economic and social and cultural situation, their values, their career plans, their conception of the efficiency of occupational guidance offers, etc.'

It appears that one of the essential elements in the counselling process is, while it is going on, to obtain participants' reactions so that the service can be adapted more closely and made more effective.

This means that the process of vocational advice and guidance can be approached from a more global viewpoint than the simple criterion of 'careers'; in the end, when the evaluation findings are reviewed, guidance is obtained on a wider variety of practices that match more closely the needs for guidance and more aggressive planning strategies in order to meet the needs of the greatest number.

Spain is one of the countries that uses what is intended to be a more typically qualitative approach to evaluation. Box 15 gives a brief description of the purpose and objective.

Box 15

The dialectic approach to evaluation

The Spanish approach to evaluation is eminently qualitative. It attempts to analyse the consequences of measures in terms of social 'viability', studying how occupational support, counselling and guidance measures meet the twofold objectives of performance and economic effectiveness and whether they make the intended impact on the people concerned.

It has one obvious advantage: it provides an opportunity to discover not only 'the facts' but also the volume of the various measures undertaken by the officials participating in the counselling process.

It operates by identifying target groups and through interview.

The main disadvantage to be borne in mind is that it appears to be difficult to measure or quantify this concept of effectiveness.

Source: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions –Eurocounsel Report – Watt. 1997 (p. 93).

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Glossary of the main abbreviations used

AAES	Regional enterprise creation allowance programme (Ireland)
ALI	Initiative programme to combat unemployment (Thuringen, Germany)
FTC	Fixed-term contracts
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CIBC	Centre interinstitutionnel de bilans de compétences (France)
CILO	Local employment initiative centres (Piedmont, Italy)
CIRRSE	Caisse interprofessionnelle de retraite par répartition du sud est (France)
INEM	National institute for employment (Spain)
LEC	Local technical education centres (Scotland)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ILO	International Labour Office
PIBE	Personalised employment search programme (Spain)
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
PMI	Pro Mente Infirmis, mental and social health association (Austria)
PROMI	Association for the mentally handicapped (Seville, Spain)
TEC	Local training and enterprise councils (England and Wales)
VUC	Adult education centre (Denmark)
VUS	Adult education subsidy (Denmark)

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Lifelong Vocational Guidance: European Case Studies

Sylvie Chiousse, Patrick Werquin

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Lifelong Vocational Guidance: European Case Studies

This synthesis report is addressed to all decision-makers, players and even users of advice on matters of vocational integration and social integration in the wider sense. In part it is a response to all those wishing to know more about the concepts of target groups and forms of action. It clearly defines the fields not yet fully explored and argues against the idea that the sole aim is vocational integration. This is central, of course, but it must not be the only objective, for there is a risk that it may never be achieved.

This report covers a series of interim solutions put to the test, or merely recommended, in various places. Nevertheless it is very much in line with the various European Union actions to promote employment. In the text that follows, the aim is to bring out the topics that recur in the reference texts as well as to outline an analysis and potential debates. Throughout the text, then, is the concern to arrive at practical recommendations.

Sylvie Chiousse and Patrick Werquin

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